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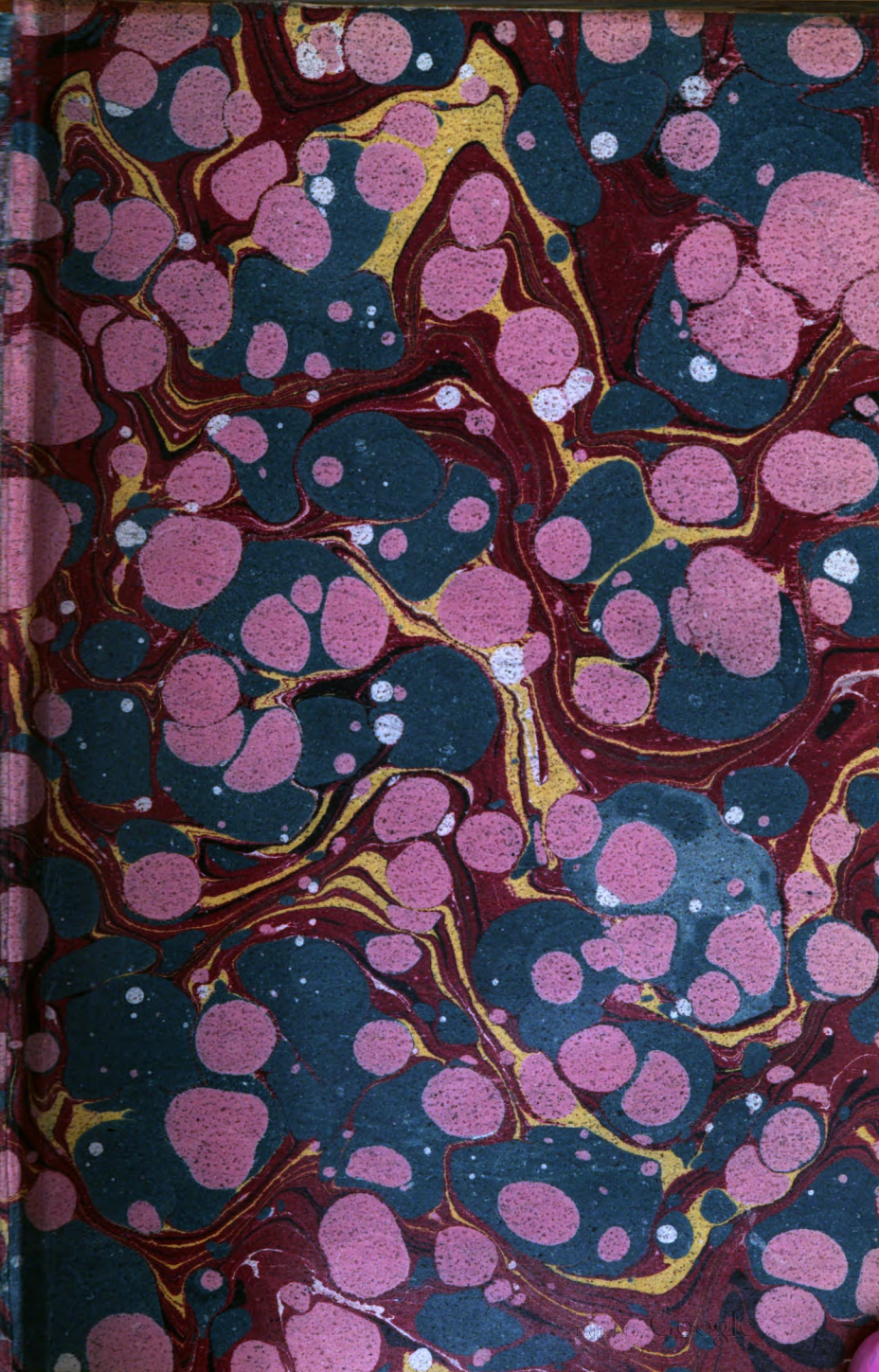

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OF

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OF

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ON

CEREMONY, MORAL POWER, PERSECUTION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, RELIGIOUS EQUALITY, AND OTHER SUBJECTS,

AND ON

THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

41

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THE

COLLECTED WORKS OF W. J. FOX.

REPORTS OF LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE CHAPEL IN SOUTH PLACE, FINSBURY.

[1836.]

ON THE PROGRESS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CEREMONY;

Illustrated in the Service performed and Sermon preached on occasion of the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

No. I.

THE festivities and splendours of the Coronation week may be regarded with at least comparative complacency. They were not, like the thanksgivings and rejoicings and illuminations which many of us remember, the commemoration of victories achieved with the wholesale destruction of human life; the celebration, by acts of debauchery, of the accomplishment of deeds of bloodshed: their character was generally as much raised above the grossness which formerly attended public festivities in this country, as their occasion was more innocent, peaceful, and becoming. A better spirit seems, by the advance of intelligence and the spread of just principles, to have been diffused throughout the numerous classes of the community, giving a more rational character to enjoyment, and elevating its nature and its influence, as the course of events in this instance has elevated its occasion. Nor was there, in these celebrations, any thing of the spirit of faction, or of party assumption, or of class predominance, more than the very

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nature of the case required, and had rendered essential to its exhibition under present circumstances. We may regard the event of the week as the fair expression of a general, of a national, interest in an individual, whose youth and sex and position command universal interest, and bid men's thoughts and feelings, their speculations and anticipations, flow in the same direction, and fix upon the same object. It is indeed a position which cannot but excite the anxious feelings, and concentrate the interests, of all reflective minds.

To a nation, to its external relations and internal interests, it may matter comparatively little whether the state and prerogatives and functions of royalty be vested in a mere child, or in the maturest age and the most expanded intelligence. When we consider what those powers and attributes are; when we see how much is, at least nominally, confided to an individual,—the important questions of polity and of religion, of government, home and colonial; the direction of the streams of honour which flow from that fountain; of justice administered under that sanction; and the momentous question of peace or war, involving such a fearful amount of consequences for human enjoyment or suffering in its decision,—we cannot but conceive that the powers of the ablest of our race, and those of the feeblest, must fall alike short; that the requisite mental and moral qualities almost partake of the characters of Providence and of Godhead; that there can be no security for their best direction in any attainments at which humanity is capable of arriving; and that, consequently, the prospects are as fair when the innocence of youth is placed on this lofty pinnacle as when it is occupied by the statesman or the philosopher. How this may bear on the wisdom of the institution, is another question. I speak of it now only in reference to the individual, and as one cause by which, in the present instance, the interest is deepened with which that individual must be generally regarded. Men look with anxiety, less on their own account than on hers, to the course which she is to hold and to the prospects which open before her; they devoutly exclaim, and may their exclamation be heard, "God speed her!"

If it be the will of a nation that its government should

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hold the monarchical form, if it resolve to concentrate such an amount of dignity, influence, and authority in a single individual, it cannot be unfitting that investiture with the office—the public investiture—should be an occasion of solemnity; that it should be surrounded with ceremonial; that religious associations also should be called in, in order to add to the impression. At the same time, it is not unreasonable to require, that if expressions be used, solemn expressions of devotion, they should be founded in truth; it is not unreasonable to require that if emblematic objects are to be used and actions to be performed, there should be meaning in those emblems and actions—a meaning consistent with the relative circumstances of the parties—a meaning consistent with the rights and privileges of humanity, or with those which are recognised as belonging to the citizens of the particular community whose first magistrate is thus inducted; it is not unreasonable to require that in every portion of the forms that are employed regard should be had to the state of opinion, of feeling, and of principle, to the past and the present condition and to the future prospects of the nation that thus honours an individual. But this is a difficult and delicate thing to accomplish. There is nothing that needs more continual adjustment than ceremony; than ceremony, especially, which claims to be religious.

Opinion necessarily changes with the accumulation of knowledge, and therefore in a country possessing a press, and in some degree freedom, it changes with the mere lapse of time; and ceremony, to have meaning and propriety and power, must accommodate itself to the existing state of opinion at the time when it is employed. But ceremony is not only liable to be affected by that becoming absurd at one time which was at a former period impressive, in consequence of the growth of opinion—it is not only ever acted on by intelligence—but there is in ceremony itself a tendency to deterioration. Such is the course which it has always held, and of which traces abound in every portion of human history. Its annals are plainly written. The progress of ceremony may be chronicled like any series of events in natural history. It goes on in a course that may be marked out as easily and distinctly as the striking root of the acorn in the ground,

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its springing up, its growth into the oak, and its putting forth branches and leaves, and flourishing for its appointed season, and then beginning to fade, decay, die, and rot into the earth from which it had so long been nourished. Where ceremony springs from the most innocent practices, where it has arisen from circumstances in themselves the most impressive, and has been of the simplest description, it has yet shown this incapacity of remaining in the same relation to men's thoughts and opinions; it has almost uniformly become subject to a change in the way in which it was regarded, until what had been the purest and simplest devotion could only be considered as superstition. In such cases sometimes there is no remedy whatever but destruction, entire and total destruction; and an admirable example, though sound judgment be requisite in the imitator, was set for reformation by Hezekiah, King of Judah, when he demolished the brazen serpent. That serpent originally had been the occasion of deliverance to the Israelites from a fearful plague in the wilderness. It had been not merely an appropriate emblem, but the external agency itself by which that deliverance was effected. It very naturally became a prized relic, guarded with care and contemplated with reverence; and from this, by the various tendencies towards idolatry, so rife in that age and country, it grew into an object of worship, until the evil appeared so deeply seated in the public mind, that a patriotic and religious prince saw no remedy but demolishing, breaking into its native elements, this ancient relic held so sacred, and consecrated by the veneration of successive ages. There is a striking instance of the tendency of ceremonial, of a simple and innocent kind originally, in the different changes undergone by what is termed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What was this at the outset? Christ and his chosen companions were celebrating the annual Jewish commemoration of the Passover; their social feast was finished; they had done their duty by the nation in commemorating the deliverance of their ancestors from Egyptian oppression; and then, at the close of the feast and of the day, and of what might be regarded in all probability as their last meeting together, they did what every Jewish family was accustomed to do at that time, and what many are accustomed to do now—they

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passed round the family cup, the cup of parting benediction; they took one of the cakes of unleavened bread made for the celebration of the Passover, and to which the Jews were at that time restricted, and they brake this amongst them, its original oneness being an emblem of their unity; its parting in their hands being a type of their connection with each other in their own separate individualities; and being also referred by Christ to his own sacrifice, a sacrifice of so much nobler a nature than that which they were celebrating by means of the paschal lamb. Nothing could be more natural, more innocent, more peculiarly social, more kind, and full of meaning which would reach every heart, than this simplest of actions. But in a very short time this was imitated by those who were very differently circumstanced; who were not bound by the ties of fraternal affection which subsisted between him and his apostles, though even among them there was a traitor; it became connected with stated acts of worship; it assumed what did not belong to it originally, the ceremonial of religious observance; being practised peculiarly by Christians, it became a badge of proselytism and of the new religion. As they were often obliged, when persecution commenced, to meet together in secret, in caves, or in darkened rooms, where only the light of the taper could shine upon their proceedings, the kindling up of tapers became connected with this and other observances, to be performed in broad daylight when the Church gained its imperial establishment. One impression of ceremonial sanctity after another was added, until this bread and wine were supposed to be the viaticum of the departing spirit; until it was imagined there was in them a peculiar sacredness, which those might not partake of to whom other observances of Christianity were open. The priesthood interfered in order to arrogate to itself and maintain such distinctions as it ever seeks and cherishes from other portions of the community. The spiritual presence of Him who originally held this simple feast was believed to be amongst them, and the notion of this presence was gradually made more substantial, more tangible, until the actual transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ was taught and believed; and thus one of the most simple forms that kindheartedness could suggest to the individual, with a

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party of friends or brethren around him for the last time in the world, rose into one of the most tremendous mysteries, one of the most awful miracles, according to its own pretensions, that have ever been recorded as exhibited on the face of the earth.

Such is the way in which ceremony goes on, even when its origin is innocent and consistent with the best exercise of intelligence. Reformation is hard indeed, whatever be the energies with which reformation is attempted. In this instance we cannot say it has been accomplished. Other associations have arisen, and the present form has rather been a divergence into a different track of thought than any thing like a proper return upon the steps by which the ascent of mystery was gained.

But, usually, ceremony arises from a different source. It flourishes in the soil of ignorance, and its stages may be distinctly marked out as they are realised by the combination of the performance of ceremony with the growth of intelligence. The first idea of ceremony usually is *the action of man upon God.* In its first form, ceremony is something by which man actually endeavours to act upon God. This was originally contemplated even in a physical sense. When we read in the book of Genesis that the Lord smelled the sweet savour of the patriarch's sacrifice, we are told by commentators that the writer adapts his style to human conceptions. It is true; and it shows what were the conceptions then entertained. It was believed in antiquity, literally believed, that the fume of sacrifice was pleasing in the nostrils of the supernatural being to whom victims were offered. It was believed even that their deities derived nourishment, corporeal nourishment, from these offerings. It was in a comparatively enlightened country, in a great empire, that we find a feast set forth for Bel and the Dragon, according to the stories handed down to us in the Apocrypha, stories no doubt faithfully representing the superstitions which at a certain period prevailed through that extended region. Man finds himself, as he thinks, in certain cases, able to minister to the divine power on which in other cases he feels dependent; and it was not without occasion that the demand in the name of Jehovah was made in one of the Psalms, " Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of

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goats?" There were deities who were believed to do this, and men who furnished provisions for the sake of securing their favour.

From this absurdity, ceremony passed into a somewhat less offensive, a mental or moral rather than a physical, form of influence. The vanity or pride of supposed deities being considered, temples were promised to be erected to their glory, offerings, representative paintings, or sculptures were to grace their temples, and to show forth their might to all who should resort thither. Odes and thanksgivings and games were promised in honour of deities, that they might be incited by that thirst of fame which prevails among men, and thus be led to favourable and propitious actions. Even with this view the human mind became dissatisfied. The inherent absurdity was too great for it to remain content therewith, and then came the second stage of ceremony, which is that of the supposed *action of God upon man.* The first stage of ceremony is the supposed action of man upon God; the second, the supposed action of God upon man: and this was believed to be realised in the prophetic faculty of augurs; in the indwelling of the divine power in consecrated images; in the outpouring of a divine energy upon devoted individuals; in the imparting, by laying on of hands, of a spirit of knowledge, wisdom, or power by one favoured individual to others, that thus they might become the guides of the people in what related to religious matters. Throughout a large extent of ancient religion, and no small portion of modern religion, we find ceremony bearing this character. Consecrated persons, consecrated vestments, consecrated buildings, consecrated places — the mountain, hill, grove, or plain; consecrated material objects, whether water, wine, oil, or fire,—these are supposed to be, as it were, the inlets by which the divine afflatus is received, and man brings himself within the sphere of an influence which he cannot command, but which commands him, and so works out his good and blessing. As the mind becomes impatient of this—as it detects what is called chance, or as it finds a merely natural influence in what it has been accustomed to regard as preternatural, another step is taken—the third stage of ceremony is arrived at, which is that of an *action upon the individual*

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himself. He no longer practises a ceremony because he believes it will work upon God, or because he believes that in it God is preternaturally working upon him; but he finds that, in consequence either of old associations, or of natural fitness, or of the peculiar tendency of his mind, certain observances put him into a peculiar state; that state he deems a religious one; to be in it is the object of his aspiration; these means and appliances are conducive, as he thinks, to such a result, and so he has recourse to them merely as one of the many links of cause and effect which may be traced in the world, and which constitute machinery by which he can become, as it were, his own master, and realise for himself what still, in its outward appearance, seems to typify to mankind the intervention of the Deity. From these stages the next and the last is, that of *the action of man upon man.* When the notion of working on God has given way to the notion of God's working upon us, when this has been superseded by that of man's working upon himself, there is but one thiug left. He perceives that natural fitness is not the real attribute of what should properly be religious ceremony; he grows tired of practising an illusion upon his own mind; but he still holds that it is a very good and a very useful one for other minds, and so observances are practised when all faith in them is gone; when all notion of their influencing the Deity, or his influencing us in them, has vanished; when they have not even the recommendation to the individual's own conscience of a natural tendency to produce such results; but he sees he may still have some power over others, and by a monstrous abuse of the principle of utility, he has recourse to them in order to impress their minds, to act upon their hearts, and induce that which, if it be realised, is realised so far as he is concerned by falsehood and hypocrisy.

Although I have described these as the successive stages of ceremony, they may be realised, and in fact they do exist, contemporaneously. They are enabled to do so by that self-perpetuating power which superstition gives to mere antiquity; they do so by the reproduction of ignorance from generation to generation, which ever supplies a certain extent of material for priestcraft to work upon; and they may be regarded even as characterising

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the great demarcations of what is called the Christian world. The Roman-Catholic system, for instance, inclines most to, retains more than any other of, the original superstition; the notion that by ceremony man acts upon God: for what else than this is the miracle of transubstantiation by the muttered ejaculations of the priest? What else than this are the offerings promised to saints and angels,—the gods of Catholicism, which have replaced the mythology of antiquity,—the promise to them of votive offerings for shrines, of tapers whose light is to burn to their glory, and of the more enduring forms of painting or sculpture, or the building of churches consecrated to their names as perpetual monuments? These are evidently efforts to influence, to act upon, supernal power, and employ it for human purposes; they are as much so in reality, though perhaps not so gross in form, as the worst that can be found in the annals of the remotest and most ignorant antiquity.

For the next stage, that of the supposed action of God upon man in ceremony, we must look to the Methodists and the more enthusiastic of the dissenting sects. From the time of the Puritans downward, there has always been a large body of believers in a peculiar, special, preternatural agency over them—something which, when the Bible was read, gave to the words a power that was not in the words themselves, nor in their meaning, nor in the natural associations that surrounded them; but a peculiar influence, incorporate as it were in those words, and making that spirit and life to them which was a mere dead letter to others. There has always been a large class believing that in opening the Bible on emergencies the passage on which the eye might fall would be an oracle to guide their steps, a divine direction in the peculiar difficulties of their lives. There have been those who have traced this influence and operation through the whole course of their religious progress, who have resolved all into this, and have called it the life of God in their souls, and who exhibit to us on a large scale the history, the minute and detailed history, of that view of ceremony in which it is the action of God upon man.

The semi-rational sects of theologians, as the Unitarians, and those who approach towards them, exemplify

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the next, the third stage, in which ceremonies are practised, not from either of the two previous reasons, but on account of their supposed agency, in the way of natural cause and effect, upon the mind of the individual. Thus we find many of this class commemorating the Lord's Supper, and having recourse to other observances; and when we ask where is their authority for such, as divine institutions, they tell us they do not regard them as such. Why, then, do they practise them, when they are generally so regarded? Because it tends to put their minds in a better state. They affirm, that though Christ did not command them, in any sense which applies to the present day and present circumstances, yet they feel very much impressed with baptism or the sacrament; it makes them feel more solemn and devout; and so they have recourse to it, and keep up the form when all notions of authoritative religious ceremony have evaporated from their thoughts; they feel the action on themselves, as they believe, and on that principle and that alone do they practise it.

The action upon others, and the going through forms chiefly, if not exclusively, for the sake of this agency, is a characteristic of the Established Church, and distinguishes it as peculiarly as do the different views that have been enumerated mark out the Catholic, the Methodistic, and the semi-rational bodies of religionists: for we cannot but perceive in the Articles and established forms of prayer and observance many things which the most enlightened of its adherents have long since renounced, and some with which we can scarcely imagine any intelligent mind in the present day to be seriously impressed as true: but there they are, and many people who believe themselves most happily righteous go on repeating, "Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners," in order that others may repeat as they repeat, and may think themselves miserable sinners, and be kept humble accordingly. Thus it is, that going to church, and joining in forms in which no interest is felt, is done for the sake of example; that is, something is done as a religious ceremony where there is no religious ceremony to the performer's perception, but where he makes others believe there is; and so he does that which tends, according to his notion of and reliance upon their superstition, to keep them in order,

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and to give him better assurance of peace and security in his temporal relations with them. It was in reference to the power which may be exercised over others, that a shrewd observer said to the King of France, "were he the mightiest monarch in the world, he would allow nobody to celebrate high mass but himself." Political authorities have generally grasped at ecclesiastical influence, from a perception of the effect with which it may be worked for the purposes to which I have just adverted. I need not show how it altogether loses the character of religion, when it is employed with such motives and for such purposes.

What, then, it may be said—what ceremony can be tolerated? If characters so general as these are to be regarded as exceptionable, where is the unexceptionable? What is it that we may do on such occasions—on such a public, national occasion as that which has just been presented? What is there that may be done without its being taken offence at, and condemned as superstitious? To this I reply, there are two grounds on which ceremony, whether religious or civil, is justifiable, and only two, that I am aware of. The first is that of specific divine appointment. Only let authority be produced, such authority as the Jew pleads for his sabbath. He sees in the books of Moses, which he receives in the plenitude of divine authority, a particular day marked out, set apart, connected with the recollection of a particular event, and the observance of it enjoined in a particular mode. All this he does, and so far his case is substantiated. Then comes the Christian sabbatarian: he substitutes another day for this particular day; he substitutes another association for this particular association connected with the day; he substitutes another mode of observance for the mode of observance originally enjoined; and yet professes to found his ceremony on the very same authority. His case as clearly breaks down with him as that of the Jew affords him a substantive authority. For myself, I confess I do not perceive in the New Testament any divinely instituted ceremonial whatever, complicated or simple. Its religion appears to me to be a system which arose in the decay and amid the abuses of ancient ceremony, however that ceremony might originate; which was in contrast with the darkness, with the "beggarly elements," as

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the apostle called them, by which it was surrounded; which rose triumphant on their ruins, and was most pure and bright when they were scattered to all the winds of heaven in the dissolution of the Jewish polity, and the destruction of the temple, of the city, and of the nation of Israel. However, if there be ceremonies which seem to any to have such authority, in that consists their individual vindication.

The only other ground is that of natural fitness or conventional agreement. By natural fitness I mean that which appeals to the most common associations of human nature—that which makes some movement, or gesticulation, or emblem, generally intelligible and generally interesting, and therefore worthy of adoption. By conventional agreement I mean such an understanding as this—that certain portions of dress or of adornment being connected with certain offices, as the crown with kingly dignity, the placing of it on the brow of the person called to occupy that station is a fit and apt emblematic performance or ceremony to be connected with the induction into the actual functions of the office. Now, much which was natural, which might in this sense be called natural, in the East, has lost its meaning with us: as the practice, for instance, of immersion with water—with them a type of purification, and applied to proselytes from the grossness of idolatry to the simplicity and purity of monotheism; with them it had meaning—with us it has no meaning whatever. We have our expressive forms and modes of action—the uncovered head, the bended knee, the choral song, the simultaneous response: in these and other ways, and by the exhibition of such emblems as those of which I have spoken, we can typify what we mean to do, and form a ceremonial adapted to any national or public occasions that present themselves. Were we asked what should be the principles on which a coronation ceremonial may be formed, I do not think there would be much difficulty in the matter. It ought evidently to be a rational form, for we are a civilised and comparatively enlightened nation. It should not embody the defunct superstitions of times that have long gone by. It should not be drawn up with feebleness or verbiage, or in a manner to disgrace the intellectual character of the country. It should bear the stamp of truth—of truth as

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now received by the best minds of which the nation can boast. Instead of the vain and dull repetitions, the altogether unmeaning forms, that we so frequently meet with in ecclesiastical documents, it should have the stately tone of the compositions of Milton, or the princely richness of the style of Bacon, or that majestic simplicity which seems to flourish, not "in immortal youth," but in immortal age, surrounded with every attribute of power, in the best portions of the common translation of the scriptures. Thus composed, and with forms adapted to the circumstances of the people, there might surely be a ceremonial for which no Englishman need to blush—from which he need not turn away at the utter nonsense, at the vain and effete remains of antiquity, with which it is disfigured, but which might be regarded as worthy of an enlightened people—worthy of a nation whose brightest glory is in its intellectual supremacy.

Another requisite would be that such ceremonial should be comprehensive; that it should be adapted for a people among whom there is almost every theological diversity that can be imagined. It should include the Hindoo and the Mahometan and the Roman Catholic, as well as the Church of England and the different bodies of Dissenters; and partake of the varieties of thought on religious matters of the human race itself, or rather be framed in the simplicity of devotion by which these varieties are pervaded. It is not in the coronation of the Queen of a realm so wide, and in its spiritual not less than its geographical boundaries and extent so diversified, that the impudence and arrogance of sectarianism should thrust itself forward and attempt to bind down majesty to its own service, and make one of the most prominent features of the ceremony the upholding of its own properties and dignities. The monarch should be crowned king or queen of the empire—of the universal British people, in all their diversities—and not of this or that sect, class, or party. Nor is there any difficulty, except to the narrow mind of a mere technical theologian, who can see no worship of God but in his own little cant phrases, which he has repeated by rote till all meaning has evaporated. The simplest worship is ever the sublimest worship; and God is most honoured when he is adored, not as the God of this or that petty clan, but as the

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"Father of all, in every age,
In every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, and by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

The only remaining quality that I need specify is, that it should be a ceremony adapted to a free people. We are a monarchy, but the representative principle is recognised amongst us, and wherever it is recognised it must virtually be the prominent principle; and if it be so virtually, it ought to stand forth as such in the forms and language of public ceremonials. The crown of this country is not held by divine right, whatever falsehoods to that effect may be foisted into professedly religious ceremonies. It is held by act of parliament—by an act of parliament prescribing the terms and conditions on which it is held, and the circumstances under which it is declared to be forfeited. With this, then, should a ceremonial correspond. It should not bear upon its brow the old mark of feudalism. It should not keep up forms of vassalage, of which the substance in most respects has passed away; or where any of it remains, remains only to show itself in a state of ceaseless warfare with what must become the predominant principles of our political constitution. There should be nothing whatever in such ceremonial that savours of servility, but a spirit of freedom diffused through the whole, breathing and brooding over it as the Spirit of God did upon the waters of chaos, to call forth the order, grandeur, and harmony of creation. Under the inspiration of such influences might words and forms be constructed into a ceremonial worthy of the august temple which has been properly chosen for its celebration; worthy of the occasion—the solemn investiture of an individual with the power of the supreme magistracy, to be exercised over millions and millions of human beings; and worthy of the parties now concerned in that ceremonial, the youthful and promising representative of a long line of kings, and the representatives of a great nation, to whose might and majesty all the regality that ever existed or can exist is but as a feather upon the wind.

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No. II.

THE CORONATION SERVICE.

HAVING thus endeavoured to trace the progress of religious ceremony, and, in tracing its progress, at the same time to analyse its nature, it now remains to apply these principles to the religious service incorporated with the recent solemnity of the coronation.

The first section is entitled, "The Entrance into the Church." It commences with this anthem:

"I was glad when they said unto me, We will go into the house of the Lord. For there is the seat of judgment, even the seat of the house of David. Oh, pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:

"As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen."

I do not object to this anthem, that it is couched in oriental phraseology, widely remote in its literal meaning from all existing circumstances. It has been good for the world that by means of the scriptures something of oriental phraseology, of oriental imagination and feeling, has been grafted upon the cold roughness of our northern stock. It is not at all amiss that a religious language which is figurative, provided we perceive the meaning, the truth, the beauty of the imagery, should be habitually employed. This practice tends to sustain the common mind in a poetical condition, and to associate that condition with religious feeling and observance. Let Jordan's stream be the river of death; and heaven the "promised land" that lies beyond; and spiritual worship, when numbers join in homage that mounts from the common heart of humanity to the common Father, be our Jerusalem temple; and Christ, the pure and meek teacher of wisdom and the victim of persecution, let him be "our passover." Still,

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in using such phraseology, it is necessary that we *do* perceive an analogy; that we bear in mind that although oriental and figurative, it is still not to be inappropriate or unmeaning.

I do not cavil here at the use of the phrase, "house of the Lord." Let that splendid edifice, so fraught with the symbols of eternal duration, so massive in its structure, and so light and graceful, and yet at the same time enduring in its ornaments; that building, containing the dust or the monuments of so many of our greatest men—men whose names make the glory of our nation and of our nature—poets, statesmen, philosophers; that building, so rich in the multiplied influences of architecture, of statuary, of associations suggested by immediate impressions upon sense, and of those which derive their power from historical and antique recollections—let that building be, and, if ecclesiastical dignitaries and those who construct services like this so please, let it be called, the "house of the Lord:" few buildings raised by human hands have better deserved the glorious appellation; but then, let those who bestow the name justify its appellation. Let it not, while called so, be made the seat of extortioners or a den of thieves. Let it be as the house of the Lord, open to his children, open to mankind, there to feel his influences, and to resort at will when they would subject their minds to the power of its manifold associations, and trace and worship God as they trace and worship him amid those works of nature in whose attributes edifices of such sublimity and magnificence seem to have most participation. It *is* the "house of the Lord;" or thus it would be, in the same sense as that in which the humblest barn where two or three meet together in the name of Christ, and in the spirit of Christ, to offer their worship, is also a house of the Lord; in the same sense as the starry heavens are the dome of his house, the adornments of a temple not made with hands, where his glory may be seen and his presence felt; in the same sense as the solitary wilderness is his house, where the wandering shepherd may rest his head upon a stone, as Jacob did of old, and dream of the ladder that ascends from earth to heaven, and on which angels of God pass and repass with their messages of beneficence; or as that in which the crowded city

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is the house of the Lord too, where all the multifarious beatings of the human heart, the countless combinations of human thought and feelings, passion and interest, are working out the designs of his providence and are promoting his glory in the advancement of his rational creatures. In such a sense, well may that edifice claim so dignified an appellation. But it is with less propriety, and with no such perception of truth or analogy, that we go on with the description of it as containing "the seat of judgment, even the seat of the house of David." Our judicial tribunals are elsewhere, and far hence is the sepulchre which is now the only earthly seat of the house of David; although there may rest under its venerable shade the ashes of monarchs great as David, and of poets whose strains breathe a kindred inspiration with those which were accompanied on the harp of Zion.

The theological abuse of oriental phraseology consists in its being pursued, by mere verbal association, until all analogy and propriety are lost sight of: and such seems to be the case here; for, starting with the "house of the Lord," we are led onwards to a description that only belongs to the Jewish monarchy, and then are exhorted to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem," and are promised prosperity if we love Jerusalem. And now what glimmering of sense is discernible? To speak literally, the peace of London and Westminster was that for which the parties concerned had much more reason to pray. What, literally or figuratively, had they to do with Jerusalem; with Jerusalem, now resting in the peace of slavery under the sway of the Turk; or the Jerusalem of old, whose temple was reduced to dust, and the dust scattered to the winds? But thus it is when language is used conventionally; when, however poetical in itself, for want of a perception of analogical truth, the soul of its poetry is evaporated; and from that which might be most beautiful and touching, we are led into a world of unreality, a tangled wilderness of words, an interminable waste of meaningless phraseology.

But if we pass with little objection the Jewish language of this anthem, what shall we say to the doxology, the sectarian doxology, by which it is concluded? What a combination is here! The anthem itself comes from times,

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language, feelings, that belong to the religion of old Judæa. The doxology comes from the dim speculations of the middle ages of nominal Christianity. It is a relique of the race of saints that spent their lives in darkening the world by words without knowledge, until they resolved all religion into dogma, and all dogma into unintelligible mysteries. What an incongruity is presented in this combination! David and St. Athanasius, the persecuting word-monger of the dark ages and the sweet singer of Israel, side by side, harnessed to draw the triumphal chariot of a British coronation! This appendage sectarianises the whole service. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: As it was in the beginning"—it was not so in the beginning: the doxology has no claim to the remoteness of antiquity here assumed: no such phraseology was employed, no such thoughts were entertained, according to any traces in history, by those whose wisdom, whose speculations, whose emotions, and the wonders of whose lives, are recorded to us in the books of the Old Testament Scriptures. Its "beginning" was only a beginning in the season of mental darkness and degradation: and that it "shall be" so "world without end" is a bolder prophecy than even episcopalian arrogance can challenge inspiration for. The absurdity of sectarian exclusiveness in a ceremony belonging to the British people is glaring. This is not national worship; this is not the national faith; it was not the faith of some of the greatest men that our country has ever produced: not the faith of Milton or of Newton, of Locke, of Lardner, or of Hartley; and equally alien from it were many of the poets and philosophers whom they represent, and at the head of whose bands their names would be placed in marshalling the intellectual aristocracy of the land. Nor has it any claim to be put forward as the faith of the British nation when inaugurating its chief magistrate.

The anthem is followed by a direction for the passing of her Majesty "up through the body of the church," taking the place assigned to her, and so on; and then it is said, "Having passed by her throne, she makes her humble adoration, and then kneeling at the faldstool set for her before her chair, uses some short private prayers." According to a previously printed and circulated direction,

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at a particular moment the Queen "uses some short private prayers"! The practice of private, that is of personal prayer; the identification of the created with the Creative Mind; the casting of the one upon the other, as it were, for strength and support,—is undoubtedly a practice to which a rightly constituted intellect will find itself impelled, especially on great emergencies, and one which must be regarded with complacency. But assuredly it is questionable how far such a practice can be made the subject of a previous printed direction; of an injunction that can only reach the outward form, and insure the practice of that outward form, whatever may be passing within; and which promises to the whole body of spectators that by a particular individual at that particular period such an outward form shall be exhibited: a process which places majesty in the position of a *figurante*, and makes the most personal, inscrutable, and spiritual act of religion, even private prayer itself, the subject of what can be little better than a sort of stage direction.

The next section is entitled "the Recognition," and the purport of it seems to be to identify the person of the Queen to the different portions of the assembly. The people are told that they are come this day to do their homage, and are asked whether they be willing to do it? —a question which would have had more pertinence if, throughout the whole course of the ceremony, there had been any time assigned during which the people, as distinguished from the privileged classes, might have rendered their homage. The form of the recognition itself is no doubt the shadow, the faint and fast-fading shadow, of an original election of the monarch. It points to the time when the chief magistrate of the country was the choice of the people of the country, or when at least their public and solemn assent was essential to his induction into that high office.

Section 3 is entitled "the First Oblation," and consists in the ceremony of the Queen's going "down to the altar, kneeling upon the steps of it," and presenting "a pall, or altar-cloth of gold," and "an ingot or wedge of gold of a pound weight;" and in the course of the service there are various other oblations, including the regalia, and a purse of gold, &c., all of which are solemnly made

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an offering, a donation, from the Queen to the Deity. This action belongs to the first and most ignorant stage of superstitious ceremony. The Jehovah of the Jews, although the Jehovah of the Jews was only the comparatively barbarous notion of a Deity, and in attributes far inferior to Christ's description of God as the universal Father, the infinite Spirit,—yet the Jehovah of the Jews indignantly demanded, in reference to sacrifices and offerings and oblation, "will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" and he who disclaims any such offerings of animals that roamed the field or forest, what occasion has he for, or what propriety is there in offering to him, "a pall, or altar-cloth of gold"? If it is only meant that these things are the perquisites of the priesthood—if this be only a different form of presenting to the Dean of Westminster, or to any other of the dignitaries engaged in the ceremonial, a valuable piece of cloth of gold, then let the oblation, to the priest be given and accepted as an oblation to the priest: but why, in the name of heaven, should it be made an offering to the Majesty of heaven?

The Litany follows, which I pass over as belonging to the common service of the Church, and having in that connection been made the subject of criticism at other times. The fifth section, "the beginning of the Communion Service," chiefly deserves notice for two or three minor points. It begins with the Sanctus, "Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Hosts." And why is this expression in reference to the Deity, "God of Hosts," kept up and made common amongst us? In tracing the names employed to designate Deity in the scriptures, a regular succession has been remarked indicative of the progress of opinion; the first appellation, Elohim, or the gods, clearly originating amid idolatrous times and people, and by its connection with singular verbs and adjectives showing the first great step which was taken in emerging out of the darkness of polytheism. Jehovah, the next term in use, became the proper name of the national God of the Hebrews; and it generally refers to the Deity in that capacity—one stage, as it were, above that of earthly sovereignty. The expression, "Lord of Hosts," is military; it arose in, and its scripture use is confined, with two or three exceptions only, to, the period in which the Jewish government had

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ceased to be a theocratical republic, and had become an oriental monarchy; a time when the people were more warlike than at any other period, and when the inevitable tendency was to worship the Deity as the God of battle. But surely this is not an appellation by which it is well or worthy that a Christian nation should invoke the Spirit, the All-pervading Spirit, the tendencies of whose creation and whose laws are to realise eventually his own glory in peace and good will, in the harmony and love of his rational creatures—especially on such an occasion. I may also remark here, that, as is usual, in the repetition of the Commandments, the injunction to keep the seventh day holy is retained—"Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day," this commandment applying only to the seventh day of the week; and the people are made to respond, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law," although neither those who repeat nor those who respond have the slightest intention of ever paying any such observance to that day, or of sanctifying any other day by that enjoined cessation of domestic work.

The Epistle selected for the occasion, to be read by one of the bishops, is from the second chapter of the 1st Epistle of Peter, commencing at the 13th verse: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme," and so on; a passage not judiciously selected, when we consider to how much misinterpretation this first phrase is liable, and how frequently and grossly it has been misinterpreted, so as to teach the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, whatever may be the course which rulers, or rather tyrants, take. That such was not the meaning of the apostles, every body knows very well. It was an ordinance of man in their time, that Jupiter and Juno, and Mars and Apollo, should be worshiped; but they rendered no such adoration. It was an ordinance of man, that almost every individual act of social life should be accompanied by some act of idolatry, but they submitted not themselves. They persevered in passive resistance to these ordinances until they overthrew the system, and unseated idolatry from its supremacy on the throne of the Cæsars; and as an abuse so gross has prevailed, it would surely be well, in a country that claims to have a government founded on the prin-

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ciples of political liberty, to avoid a phrase which is overloaded with slavish associations.

This section finishes with the Nicene Creed, the repetition of which probably belongs to that class of ceremony in which individuals who practise it are endeavouring to act upon their own minds; for so strange are some of the tenets of that creed, that though I can understand how a man by repetition may endeavour to force himself into something like acquiescence in it, I cannot understand how he should expect it to act upon others in an age like the present.

The next section indicates the place of the Sermon, which is not yet before us. That is followed by section 7 —"the Oath." To this there is the common objection which applies to the administration of oaths in this country,—that to the phrase with which it concludes, "So help me, God,"—a phrase the feebleness and inefficiency of which have been well exposed by Paley in his *Moral Philosophy*, but to which there is also an objection that Paley did not urge, but which has been strongly put by Bentham. It is an attempt to direct and pledge the operations of Omnipotence upon a certain contingency. It invokes the Deity, and assumes as the obligation of the oath that the invocation will be heeded, to restrain or put forth his infinite power according to the direction of the administrator. It belongs to that first stage of ceremony in which man attempts to act upon God, and thinks that by the use of certain forms he has insured the result, and committed the Deity to act in the way he contemplates. Leaving this, however, we only remark on the oath, that it is a condensed expression of sectarian predominance and tenacity; that the dearest rights and fundamental laws of a nation can rise in it to no higher level, can occupy no more prominent position, can claim no more binding acknowledgment, than the peculiar privileges, however gained, of a particular sect, of a theological party, or rather of a sectarian priesthood. "Will you, to the utmost of your power," the archbishop asks, "maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion established by law?" Why, here is a trap for conscience. "The true profession of the gospel." To be sure, such "true profession" ought to be maintained by every one

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who, finding the truth of the gospel, is impelled by the convictions which have beamed in upon the soul to give them utterance, and to lend whatever weight can attach from the powers of his own mind or the consistency of his own character. But then this "profession" is identified with the "Protestant reformed religion as established by law," whether that be or be not "the true profession of the gospel" as it commends itself to individual conscience. "And will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the United Church of England and Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established within England and Ireland, and the territories thereunto belonging?"—thus endeavouring to preclude all chance of improvement, all openings for rendering their doctrine or worship, discipline or government, more conformable with the opinions that may prevail, and with juster views that may obtain currency. "And will you preserve unto the bishops and clergy of England and Ireland, and to the churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them, or any of them?" Here again is ambiguity—pernicious ambiguity. The chief magistrate is sworn to maintain all such privileges as do belong to the hierarchy, or as shall belong to the hierarchy. But how if the privileges that shall belong to them by the voice of the legislature should be an abridgment of the privileges that do belong to them, in what condition is the sovereign then placed? Assuredly in a doubtful one, and doubtful it was felt to be, or rather no doubt was felt on the subject, but the oath was conscientiously understood to preclude all improvement, by George III., who for so many years resisted the rights of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. It is not in this royal inauguration that any sect should dare to raise its head, and make its monarch a bond-slave to its own party and petty purposes.

The eighth section is entitled "the Anointing;" and in this portion of the ceremony there seems to be a feeble and remote attempt, but still an attempt, to invest the whole with positive divine authority. It might be inquired as to this entire Service, what is its authority? does it claim to be of God, or does it profess to be of men? and if of men, by whom agreed upon and when instituted?

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where are the credentials of its national adoption and of its national obligation? It has no such to offer—it has grown up, as it were, by the accumulation of tradition, with now and then a quiet innovation, in the indirect manner that belongs to the Established Church of this country, among the remarkable effects of which course has been the incorporation of a forgery in one of the articles of its faith. But there seems here an attempt at exciting the associations peculiar to a divine ordinance. In one of the prayers, the archbishop says, "Bless and sanctify thy chosen servant Victoria, who by our office and ministry is now to be anointed with this oil, and consecrated Queen of this realm." The oil is called "Holy Oil," as if there were in it some indwelling of divine virtue or power: and when it is employed the phraseology used is, "Be thou anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed: and as Solomon was anointed king by Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, so be you anointed, blessed, and consecrated Queen over this people, whom the Lord your God hath given you to rule and govern, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Here is too much approximation towards that attempt at imposition which was described as the last and worst stage of ceremony, when practices are meant to have a peculiar effect on the minds of the people, grounded simply on their presumed ignorance and superstition.

This portion of the service is introduced by a Hymn, which in the terseness of its language is of more merit as a composition than very much indeed of the Service before us, but to which there are exceptions of a different kind. It runs thus:

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And warm them with thy heav'nly fire.
Thou who th' Anointing Spirit art,
To us thy sevenfold gifts impart;
Let thy bless'd unction from above
Be to us comfort, life, and love.

Enable with celestial light
The weakness of our mortal sight:
Anoint our hearts, and cheer our face
With the abundance of thy grace:
Keep far our foes, give peace at home:
Where Thou dost dwell, no ill can come:

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Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Spirit of both, to be but One.
That so through ages all along,
This may be our triumphant song;
In Thee, O Lord, we make our boast,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

The word "Ghost" is exceptionable. But what shall we say of the last petition? It has been made a great argument against non-conformist societies, that by the choice which they claim of their own teachers, the people are dictating to the instructor; that the instructor is too much under the influence of those whom he should be in a position only to treat as his scholars; and that this essential evil in every form of popular church government shows the necessity of the interposition of a higher power which shall assign its teachers to the people, and place over them men to whose instruction they are to submit. But here, where the hierarchy of the Church addresses the Omniscient Deity, is a positive instruction as to the kind of wisdom that is to be imparted; we find a direction to the Deity as to the faith which he is to infuse into his creatures' minds and to keep uppermost in their thoughts. The prayer is not "teach us to know the truth;" not "teach us what we are to think so far as we can think any thing of the Infinite Majesty on high"—no, it is,

"Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Spirit of both, to be but One."

Teach us Trinitarianism, and teach us nothing else, and make this, whether right or wrong, our everlasting "boast"—this is what we wish to know—this is what we ask of the Deity to make us know—while we assume the attitude of pupils prescribing even to an Omniscient teacher the doctrines which he is to inculcate upon our consciences. How different is this from the petition of the poet, whether he were Roman Catholic or unbeliever:

"If I am right, thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart
To find that better way."

The disposition evinced, whether it imply the infallibility of the Catholic Church, or the indifference of infi-

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delity, shows itself to advantage by the side of the mock humility of Protestant episcopacy. The ninth section is, "the presenting of the Spurs and Sword, and the Oblation of the said Sword." On this matter of oblation I have already commented, but I will read the admonition with which the archbishop presents the sword to the Queen, putting it into her right hand:

"Receive this kingly sword, brought now from the altar of God, and delivered to you by the hands of us the bishops and servants of God, though unworthy. With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy Church of God, help and defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order: that doing these things, you may be glorious in all virtue; and so faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ in this life, that you may reign for ever with Him in the life which is to come. Amen."

A most appropriate admonition in those ages of chivalry from which perhaps the substance of it has descended, but, considered in relation to present circumstances and the person addressed, of marvellous inappropriateness. Such language would have thrilled the heart of Richard Cœur de Lion, and he would have grasped the sword with fell purpose to wield it to the destruction of the infidels and the recovery of Palestine. This is an admonition to be addressed to a knight-errant setting forth in quest of adventures to deliver the oppressed all the world over. Strange would it seem to the good people of this country were the Queen to take literally the archbishop's injunction, and go forth riding a tilt at iniquity and heresy, herself dealing the mortal blows of justice, and cutting down the legal authorities that rob widows or orphans by the consumption of their inheritance in the process of litigation.

The tenth section. "The Investing with the Royal Robe, and the Delivery of the Orb," is accompanied with an admonition to which a similar objection cannot be taken. It ends, however, with a very questionable sentence: "And when you see this orb set under the cross, remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ

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our Redeemer. For He is the Prince of the kings of the earth; King of kings, and Lord of lords: so that no man can reign happily who derives not his authority from Him, and directs not all his actions according to His laws."

The introduction of this peculiar notion of the kingship of Christ over the world, whatever theological evidence it may be supposed to possess, should have been considered with a view to the foreign relations of this country, and to the different classes of potentates with whom it is in alliance. Are we prepared to say that no one can reign happily but a Protestant prince acknowledging Jesus Christ according to the dogmas which are affirmed or implied in this Service? May not the Roman Catholic monarchs of Europe, although they are reprobates from the divinity of English episcopacy, yet reign happily? Nay, are we prepared to say that Mahometan or heathen potentates may not in wisdom and in justice direct the exertions of their subjects, execute the dictates of right, and lead on a nation to prosperity and improvement? The Pasha of Egypt or the Sultan of Turkey does not derive his authority from Christ, nor professes to direct "his actions according to his laws;" and yet with these powers we maintain relations of amity, and rejoice at the progress of their subjects in the career of civilisation. We look back in history with delight to many and many a reign the authority of which was not derived from Christ, nor its powers conducted with a reverence (as such) for his laws. The glories of Haroun al Raschid would continue to gladden childhood, although the theological spirit that dictated such expressions as these should reprove the pleasure as a mental rebellion against the laws of religion. But of that there is little fear; when divines come into the sphere of common life, their language obeys the control of common sense.

The next section—the eleventh—is the Investiture with the Ring, and the Sceptre bearing the Dove, in which the only thing to be noticed is the feebleness and obscurity of the language, little worthy of such a solemnity. "Be so merciful that you be not too remiss; so execute justice that you forget not mercy. Judge with righteousness and reprove with equity, and accept no man's person. Abase the

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proud and lift up the lowly; punish the wicked, protect and cherish the just, and lead your people in the way wherein they should go." Although there is a sprinkling of scripture words, yet the whole character of the composition is most feeble and jejune. Still it is not so thoroughly contemptible as that of section thirteen,—"the presenting of the Holy Bible." In such bald, disjointed, and emptily conventional phrases as these does the British hierarchy commend the divine volume to Britain's Queen:

"Our gracious Queen, we present you with this book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom; this is the royal law; these are the lively oracles of God. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that read the words of this book; that keep and do the things contained in it. For these are the words of eternal life, able to make you wise and happy in this world, nay, wise unto salvation, and so happy for evermore, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; to whom be glory for ever."

Only imagine any pretender to literature showing so utter a want of appreciation as in such a style as this to praise any of the grand classics of our native language! It would scarcely have been creditable to the teacher of a Sunday school bestowing a copy of Miss Hannah More's *Sacred Dramas* or Mrs. Trimmer's *Scripture Stories* on the young charity children, and vainly supposing that by diluting his atoms of thought he was levelling his speech to their comprehension.

The next section is "the putting on of the Crown;" and here my remarks must relate to the action rather than to the phraseology. At the moment when the archbishop placed the crown on the head of the Queen, amid the enthusiastic acclamations of that vast assemblage, echoed from without by the roaring of artillery and the shoutings of countless multitudes; and immediately the peers and peeresses raised their coronets and placed them on their own brows, the effect is said to have been—it must have been—surpassingly grand. To a certain extent, the grandeur was mental as well as external. In that self-crowning of the barons of the realm spoke the voice of old feudality, of Saxon tenacity, of Norman pride. The archbishop crowned the Queen; they crowned themselves, claiming thereby to be her peers. There is in the action the remains of that

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indomitable pride which would not acknowledge any superiority over themselves but what was spontaneously conceded by themselves. It evidently tends to set at naught all assumption of any other superiority, and with it the ceremony too. Let bishop or archbishop, let the priest of whatever church, say what prayers he pleases, and use what gesticulations he pleases, we are—such is its language—we are the source and champions of our own rights; the oil of our anointing is the courage that glows in our hearts and the might of our strong arms, with which we will defend those rights, and assert ourselves the peers of the highest rank that can be named as existing in the community that we constitute. And were there no lower species of rank in this country—were there no human beings existing under the dignity of a baron—this would be the height of moral sublimity, as it must have been of external and imposing effect. But with that limitation the sublimity ends, for this is only an assertion by the privileged classes of the country. They bear their own crowns, and acknowledge only a voluntary subordination to the power which is crowned by sacerdotal authority; but as to all others they are totally forgotten. Each class of peers, in rank and order, proffers its homage to the newly crowned sovereign; but the people are not there with their homage—no, nor any one to represent them, those who bear the character of their representatives being merely spectators. Now, does this correspond with the present condition of society? Is it not a fact, impressed upon the laws and constitution of the country, that the people are the nation, and that peers and sovereignty only exist for the common good, and are merely an agency for the promotion of the common good? Is it not a fact that their majesty is the great, the one all-absorbing majesty of the realm, from which all other must be derived, and in contingency upon the will of which it must be held? They in their multitudes—they in their freedom and in their power—should have been the soul of the ceremony, that so the Queen might have been crowned Queen of the nation, and not merely of a comparatively small number of those who belong to the privileged and the priestly classes. The government of this country, we are told by those who have taken rank amongst the bravest of its chivalry and the loftiest of its aristocracy—the govern-

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ment of this country must be substantially in the House of Commons—in the representatives of the people. There it really is, and eventually must be recognised, whatever form may seem to say the contrary. There is the supreme legislative power of the nation. And yet that power here goes for nothing. There is not a trace or vestige of it—it is not there in its might and its majesty; it is not there even in its humility. It is not there to offer homage, or to kneel upon the steps of that throne which can rest alone upon its voluntary submission. Great and fatal is this omission to the claims of the ceremonial on public respect.

Section 14 is "the Benediction," and it is one to the propriety and to the beauty of which no exception can be taken, unless it be in the second clause. "The Lord give you a faithful senate, wise and upright counsellors and magistrates, a loyal nobility and a dutiful gentry; a pious and learned and useful clergy; an honest, industrious, and obedient commonalty." There seems in this curious distribution of duties an endeavour to accommodate them to the different gradations of society. Assigning to the nobility the more voluntary and chivalrous and dignified virtue of loyalty, it allows the gentry to take their place in the performance of duty merely, while to the honest commonalty are left the blessings of industry and of obedience. I see not why the commonalty might not have had loyalty and duty too, nor why there might not have been wished for them some of that piety and learning which it may nevertheless be proper to pray for on behalf of the clergy.

In "the Inthronisation" there is an exhortation which has a good deal of the assuming language that we have occasionally noticed on the part of the hierarchy, and an attempt to identify the Service with divine authority by those remote associations which are all the parties dare venture upon. "Stand firm and hold fast from henceforth the seat and state of royal and imperial dignity which is this day delivered unto you in the name and by the authority of Almighty God, and by the hands of us the bishops and servants of God, though unworthy." The last word is not without reason if we look a little onward to the Communion Service, to which I shall now pass, having already noticed "the Homage," at least in its omissions.

The service is the usual Communion Service. It con-

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tains some of those remarkable expressions by which the Church of England adopts the language of the Church of Rome, and seems to imply even the doctrine of transubstantiation, such as being made "partakers of the body and blood" of Christ—a phrase which is several times repeated. But what I would remark is, that this Communion, this Lord's Supper, is partaken of, on the occasion in question, only by a few members of the episcopal order, and afterwards administered to the Queen. The language is such, however common its use, and however it may be taken on other occasions to describe people in general—the language is such as on this occasion we are compelled to regard as descriptive of those who actually communicated. Now the bishops, before partaking of the Sacrament, in their general confession thus describe themselves. They say to the Diety in the presence of the monarch and of the peerage of the realm, of the members of the House of Commons, and of multitudes besides: "We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word, and deed, against thy divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable!"

These words describe a state of mind that really may and does exist, although in a civilised community we may hope its existence is rare; a state of mind in which the consciousness of foul and base guilt weighs down the soul into an abjectness that misbecomes a rational being under any other circumstances—but a state of mind that assuredly does not mark people out as fit to hold the rod of spiritual or of temporal authority, or to be in any other position than, were they Catholics, that of devoting themselves to lives of solitary penance in order to wear out the heart-oppressive sense of guilt, or, in a country like this, of spending their days within the walls of a house of correction, or of presenting themselves as candidates for admission at the portals of a penitentiary. Such men "fit to govern!" We can scarcely say they are "fit to live," unless it be in the earnest endeavour to wipe off some stain of that guilt by which their minds and consciences are so foully blotted,

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and to render some service to society—to advance, if possible, towards that balance which it is not likely they should ever reach between their future good and their past evil deeds. It is perfectly monstrous, if this account of their own souls be true, that in such a day of high solemnity, they should dare, or be allowed, to occupy the foremost place, and begird the person of the Queen—the young, ingenuous, and virtuous Queen; they, in their rank and self-condemned pollutions!

I know we shall be told they are worthy, excellent, learned, and pious persons. Why, then, do they tell us, why do they tell the nation, why do they tell the Deity, to the contrary? Why should hypocrisy, which has been so often enjoined to assume a virtue though it had it not, assume a vice, a mass of viciousness, that does not exist? Is it right, is it fitting, that language should be severed from its meaning—that such expressions as these should be employed in reference to any human beings except those unhappy few, if such there be, who are really conscious of being in the wretched state so emphatically described? Is it fitting that the language of guilt should thus be held up to glory—that vice should be sanctified in conventional language, and men taught to do honour to their God by belying their own natures and consciences? I know that such language is used from Sunday to Sunday throughout the different churches of the empire; it is part of that conventionalism by which the very heart and soul of religion have been eaten out—by which men have been taught to use words with no reference to the meaning of the words—by which they have been familiarised with the grovelling notion that the Diety is to be propitiated and his favour gained by loading ourselves with accusations; while from the utterance of one-thousandth part of these imputations by a fellow-creature the individual would recoil with abhorrence, would spurn at the culumniator, and would think himself justified, however meek his spirit, in invoking the power of the law, to interpose its penalties for the protection of his character and for the rectification of the injury.

Religion can only exist in its pure and spiritual reality as its professed language bears the sacred stamp of truth; and here, if ever, throughout such a Service as this, should

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the language of truth have been most anxiously preserved. Instead of that, we find truth all abroad. We find truth in the fairs and festivities that were held; the truth of honest-hearted simple enjoyment. We find truth in the theatres that were thrown open; the truth of mirthful or of tearful personation. We find truth abroad in the streets; the truth of respectful loyalty, gazing at such portions of the pomp and show as passed in public, and testifying its sympathy with the occasion. It is only in what is called the "house of the Lord"—it is only in this professedly national and religious ceremony—that we find language stained with the characters of falsehood.

Long and happy and prosperous be the time before there will be any occasion for the repetition of the ceremony! —amply and continuously realised be the benedictions that by millions have been poured out upon the head of its object!—but nevertheless it is not to be passed over unregarded. The importance of truthfulness of language—of truth to opinion, feeling, and conduct, in every concern, whether it be that of daily business or of rare solemnity —cannot be too frequently enforced; and it is needful to point attention to services of this description, in order to sustain that continuous moral criticism upon churches and governments and society in general, by which the improvement of institutions and of society will be best secured. It is important we should do so for the sake of the throne—the throne begirt, as it often must be, with sycophancy, selfishness, and falsehood; where it is difficult for truth to penetrate, or when it has penetrated to gain firm and enduring footing. There is little excuse for aggravating the temptations by which sovereignty is surrounded, and which deepen to intensity our interest in the safe passage of its individual possessor through the fierce and fiery ordeal created by its possession. We ought to throw the weight of our honestly avowed opinions into the scale of truth on an occasion like the present, from a regard to those classes, the few and the many, whose relative situation is entirely lost sight of in this ceremonial, where the few are made every thing, and the many, the millions, nothing. We should declare that such is not the constitution of this country; that the few exist for the many, and all institutions for the sake of raising the condition of those who

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constitute the body of the community. We should maintain our allegiance to truth for the sake of the Church itself, that at length its ministers and prelates may be shamed out of superstitions that have become obsolete, and that if produced now for the first time would be met with ridicule and disgust; that if they will adopt rites and forms, they should have some harmony with the opinions of the time and with feelings that belong to the common heart of humanity. We should raise our voices for the sake of society, too much infected by the taint of conventionalism, and too apt to tolerate the mere use of words as a substitute for realities. In each and all we should feel that even an occasion which may not occur again in the lives of the great majority of us, ought not to be passed over without calling forth our fair estimate of what its merits are, and our just censure on sins of omission and of commission.

Oh, if, while some of these many mummeries were passing, and while his own incessantly repeated name was ringing like a verbal charm at the end of every admonition, doxology, and prayer, the invocation had been suddenly answered, and He, Christ, in bodily presence and celestial glory, had presented himself to that august and brilliant assembly—while the young object of the ceremony might have stood as erect and unabashed as any, how would coped and mitred prelates, and coroneted peers, in the midst of all their conventionalisms and worn-out forms and fallacies, have sunk in dismay and confusion as he repeated, "For this cause was I born, and to this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

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No. III.

THE CORONATION SERMON.

THE Sermon delivered, in the course of the Coronation Service, by the Bishop of London, has been published by royal command; and that command was most fitly issued, because the public must needs have a strong interest in knowing what doctrine, religious, moral, or political, was inculcated upon the mind of the sovereign at a time so favourable for making a deep and permanent impression. It does indeed claim attention, to judge by internal evidence, on yet higher grounds; for the preacher speaks of the archbishop as "God's minister," and of himself in this discourse as "Christ's ambassador:" and to those who are vested with such authority no attention can be too reverential. At the same time, as in the case of other ministers and ambassadors, whether attending this solemnity to add to its splendour by their presence, or whether engaged in the more ordinary exercise of their functions, we have surely a right to ask for their credentials from the powers by which they profess to be delegated. Whether we shall find these credentials in the obvious inspiration, or even in the obvious truth, of some of the sentiments which were then advanced, may, without much presumption, be regarded as very questionable. Mingled with many things that must command assent—some of them universally recognised truisms, others propositions which have been established by the power of the human intellect, or to Christians by the authority of the scriptures through many successive generations—there are in this discourse others of a very different description, and four points in particular to which I would direct your notice as decidedly exceptionable. I think that it draws an unsound parallel between Jewish ceremonial duty and Christian virtue; that it misapplies religious principle to the enforcement of political submission; that it overrates egregiously the moral influence of exalted station; and that it misstates the royal conduct best adapted to promote the highest interests of

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the nation and of mankind. To these points, in succession, I shall direct your attention.

The discourse begins with a description of the covenant made by King Josiah, in the name of the Jewish people, with the Lord their God. In the 34th chapter of the 2d book of Chronicles, at the 31st verse, we are told: "The king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book." And the preacher soon afterwards remarks, that "the object of that proceeding was, to bind both king and people, by the formality of a public and united pledge, to the performance of their duty, as servants of the most high God. Such also," he adds, "is the purport and intent of this day's solemnity." Now, there are two things which it is incumbent on the teachers of religion and morality to avoid confounding: they are, duty as it existed under the Jewish peculiarity; and virtue, or goodness, or excellence of character, as it arises from the application of Christian principles. We do not live under the Jewish dispensation, nor has that which now exists any peculiar affinity with it as relates to this matter. In Judaism, command was almost every thing. In Christianity, command is scarcely any thing. In Judaism, there was specific injunction for the performance of specific external acts, with appropriate sanctions of reward and punishment annexed. The object of Christianity, on the other hand, is to form disposition; to generate a state of pure and right feeling; to go at once to the root of all goodness, to cherish it there, and then to let its exterior demonstrations follow very much the peculiarities of individual constitutional tendencies. Consequently, while the Jewish system appropriately employed that kind of public "pledge," covenant, bargain, as it were with the Deity, described in the bishop's text, nothing can be less appropriate to, or less consistent with, the spirit of Christianity. The Jewish system was external, ceremonial, and exclusive. In the midst of the bishop's unconditional laudations of the character of King Josiah—of laudations which would most naturally be understood as holding him up unreservedly as a model for modern imitation—it might

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surely have been adverted to, that a portion of the goodness and duty for which he was praised by the Jewish historians was the fierce and sanguinary pursuit in which he was engaged against those who followed an idolatrous form of worship. He not only overthrew the temples and destroyed the high places of Baal, but he sacrificed the priests upon their own altars; he took their lives unrelentingly, nay piously, by wholesale massacre, and burned their bones upon their altars for an eternal desecration. Now of this, as Jewish virtue, I have nothing to say; but if the individual in whose merits it stands most prominent be held up as a model for Christian rulers, why then it is a species of virtue against which one is bound to enter a solemn protest. The Roman-Catholic system may be as idolatrous as was the worship of Baal, in the eyes of those by whom these commendations of King Josiah are put forth; the Hindoo worship, prevailing over a large portion of the British dominions, is clearly and essentially idolatrous;—and yet the pursuit of a policy at all analogous to that of King Josiah with either the Catholic priest or the Hindoo Brahmin would scarcely be tolerated in these days, or held consistent with the safe exercise of the functions of regality. Nor is Christianity propitious to vows, pledges, covenants, of any description. They may have abounded in the practices of some classes of Christians, but in practising them they have scarcely been following the precepts or example of Him whose name they bear. His admonition was to "swear not at all;" and in the enumeration which he gives in illustration of that precept, it seems by no means unlikely that he had in view the different modes of binding themselves by ceremonial vows which were practised among the Jews. In proportion as we enter into the peculiar spirit of Christian morality—as we see that it consists in general moral principles, and in the culture of holy and beneficent dispositions—we shall be wary of committing ourselves by obligations of this sort to future and external acts. We shall not be forward to do it for ourselves, still less shall we feel at liberty to do it for others. Josiah made a covenant not only for himself but for the people, by which it seems the people held themselves bound; and a parallel is drawn between this and what took place on a recent occasion, and it is said, "the people are called upon

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to witness this solemn pledge, to accept their lawful sovereign as given them by God to rule over them, and to promise their obedience, affection, and respect." Now, whatever may be thought of a promise of "obedience" in external actions, the promise of "affection and respect," that is to say, the promise of a particular state of mind in reference to a particular individual, whatever may prove eventually to be the character and conduct of that individual, is one of the greatest absurdities which can be committed. It might as well be promised that in a given spot, on some given and remote future day, there shall be "a sunshine in the shady place." The phenomena which the combination of the elements may bring about are not less subject to the control of man than are the results of those varying elements which combine to make up his own constitution, and which will move on in their natural sequence of cause and effect beyond the reach of his previous volition; or in reference to which, if his volition is exercised, he may find that exercise producing wretchedness where he anticipated from it only the happiest results. Promises and pledges have turned out ill from the time when Jephthah vowed to sacrifice the first living thing that met him on his return from his expedition against the Ammonites, down to the last vote that an elector may have given against his conscience and his country, because he had bound himself by a previous pledge to a candidate, and had left only the wretched alternative between private falsehood and public delinquency.

True religion and sound morality make no bargain with the Deity; and the morality or religion that attempt to do so show themselves of a comparatively low, mean, and base description. In proportion as duties are understood, it is seen that they are interests. The work of the follower of Christ—the work of the enlightened moralist, whatever religion may be associated with his morality—is not to do so much toil in the supposed service of God, in order that he may have a right to such and such wages. It is to cultivate the powers which belong to his moral constitution—it is to strive after their expansion until he achieve the full excellence of which his nature is capable—it is to hold on his course, finding that what has often been made repulsive, by being represented as an enforced obligation, is really

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attractive because it is his true interest, and when realised will constitute his highest happiness.

The next passage for comment, and which relates to the second point I mentioned—the application of religious principle to civil allegiance or submission—runs thus:

"The forms of human polity may differ according to the circumstances which lead to their institution in different societies of men; but to whatever hands the supreme administration of them is committed, the authority which makes them available to the ends of government is derived from God. The powers that be are ordained of Him, although the persons who exercise them be not of his appointment; and so it is that while the sovereign of a country holds his office in virtue of the laws of man, he may assert his authority and claim his appropriate honour in virtue of the laws of God. The diadem which encircles the brow of royalty may be placed there by human hands, and after the letter of human compacts; but it bespeaks a majesty of a more exalted and transcendent kind than any human agency can confer. As to the person who is entitled to our allegiance, man's ordinances may be our guide; but the right motive to loyal obedience is this,—that the power which claims it is of God."

I apprehend the learned preacher mis-states here the apostolic doctrine concerning civil government. Both St. Peter and St. Paul assert, to those whom they addressed in their epistles, that the powers that be are of God—that all power is of God. But, to understand what they meant, we must advert to the circumstances under which they wrote, and the notions which they were endeavouring to counteract. The Jews continually brought calamities on themselves by their insubordination and their restlessness under the Roman authority. And their frequent insurrections were on no principles of political liberty; they were not connected with particular grievances from which they desired redress; but they were the result of a fanaticism, the prevailing tenet of which was, that the king who should rule over them must be one selected specially by the Deity, and by him anointed to that office. This divine right they did not find in the imperial lords of Rome, and hence they were continually trying to throw off their yoke. It is evident that, with such a notion, the Jews could be peaceful

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subjects in no country whatever. It was a constant root of bitterness—a never-failing fountain of insubordination and disturbance. The ground which the apostles took in opposition to it was, that all government is of God: that is to say, God as much sanctions that at which human reason arrives in the exercise of its faculties—those social arrangements which men frame for mutual protection—as he did the authority of the anointed kings of Israel. They are of God, as he is the author of the social tendencies which lead to their formation; as much of God as the most preternatural interposition ever recorded in order to give a sanction to some particular mode of authority, or to some particular person in its exercise. Evidently, therefore, this doctrine of the apostles does not really teach any theory of divine right, or any peculiar influx of divine majesty on those who may be set apart for the exercise of the functions of royalty. Its universal affirmation is equivalent, or nearly, to a universal negation. It puts all governments on the same footing, as to divine authority, so long as they accomplish their social purposes. It allows them to rise as the wants and desires of men generate them, and it extends to all one common divine appointment, as every thing is of divine appointment that is conducive to man's peace, security, well-being, and progress.

But there seems in the Sermon to be an imitation of something more. The mysticism of this language—"it bespeaks a majesty of a more exalted and transcendent kind than any human agency can confer"—is not very easy to be penetrated. Is it meant, in the distinction between the power and the person, that certain political functions, as those of kingship, are of God, while the choice of the individual who exercises them may be left to human arrangement? How far is it meant to continue and extend this divine sanction? Are all gradations of authority to be regarded as of God, while the parties by whom they are exercised may be of royal or popular appointment, or of their own appointment, if they have the power? We are left entirely at sea. If it be merely meant that any who exercise supreme authority may claim this heavenly majesty as infused into their natures, why then it belonged, for a while at least, to the French directory; it resides in the American congress, with its senate and president; it be-

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longs to the citizens in general assembly of the little republic of San Marino; it is to be found every where; it is coextensive with social institutions. But thus regarded the grandiloquent phrase of the preacher evaporates entirely into a smoke of words. We cannot but suppose a purpose; and, to judge by general and obvious tendency, that seems to be to connect a kind of superstitious feeling with the exercise of certain functions, with the enjoyment of certain titles, and to make religious principle restrain the common principles of human judgment, and prohibit our subjecting them to the tribunal of opinion. And that something of this sort was the object is confirmed by what follows:

"On the other hand, a recollection of this truth is the only security for a right administration of that power according to the rules of equity and mercy. Those princes, and those only, who remember from whom it is derived, will bear in mind the purposes for which it is given, and will discharge the duties of their high office as knowing them to be the duties of a sacred trust."

Here all the rights of nations—all the power of the wisdom of a community to secure the interests of that community—all the responsibility of those who exercise the most momentous functions—are swept away in order to substitute that slight and filmy, that mere cobweb hold upon appropriate conduct which is to be derived from the religion and conscientiousness of the individual ruler. There is to be no hope, no security for good government, but the religious notion of the sovereign, that his or her power is of God. Nations have generally thought it expedient to hold some other security. They have done well and wisely in not committing their important interests to a tenure so frail as this. It is not the fact of any government on the face of the earth, that this is the only security; assuredly it is not the fact with our own. Wherever there is representation, in the suffrages of the people is a better security. Wherever there is a free press, in the exercise of public opinion is a better security. Nay, even in the most simple forms of despotism there is a better security in the apprehension of popular tumult or of military insurrection.

The third point which I mentioned was an exaggerated view of the influence of worldly station upon the best inter-

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ests of mankind. We are told of its being amongst the functions of royalty "to diffuse, from their dazzling but fearful eminence, a salutary and purifying light over the whole range of society;" and the preacher says, "we are bound to tell them"—those who possess regal authority—"that if God has done more for them, as to worldly things, than for the rest of mankind, they are thereby enabled, and will be expected, to do more for Him!" More for Him! To do more for God! What is there that all the regality that ever existed on the face of the earth can do for God? What more for Him can be done by the monarch in the plenitude of his power, by the statesman in the exercise of legislative authority, by the warrior at the head of conquering armies, or by priests and pontiffs arrayed in all the pride of their sacerdotal grandeur, than by the humblest peasant that tills the soil, or by the mere inanimate dust, the sand that is scattered on the sea-shore? There is something so presumptuous in the very phraseology, that we almost overlook the absurdity of connecting it with station rather than with intellectual and moral attainment. What is it that royalty can do, so circumscribed and limited as it is in this country? It cannot substitute truth for falsehood, nor, permanently, falsehood for truth. Its influence extends only to superficialities. It may relax or it may tighten the bonds of etiquette. It may either permit a free, or impose a constrained, mode of intercourse—that is, it may elevate laxity or hypocrisy of manners. It may give the advantage of fashion to this or that school of art or species of amusement; and it may attract, by the love of show and the desire of consorting with high society, even to one mode or form of worship rather than another, and give the Athanasian Creed or the Apostles' Creed its preponderance, in the parrot-like repetition of the lips when the words uttered sink not into the heart;—but scarcely more than this can it accomplish. And then comes a successor of different tastes, and the scene shifts as in a theatre. The real sources of "salutary and purifying light," the true agents of the power that penetrates "through the entire frame of society," are those whom God anoints with regality of mind—whom he endows with authority over the souls of others—who dissipate the difficulties of science, and enlarge the domains of knowledge—who build up the

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palace of intellect, exalt the spirit of art and wield the golden sceptre of poetry, lay bare the foundations of politics and morals, and herald while they impel the onward progress of humanity. Not that they ever dream, or that apostles and prophets ever dreamed, of doing any thing for God. To do something for his creature man is the highest aim they propose to themselves; and by following out that aim, by their discoveries, reasonings, inventions, and the exercise of the mighty faculties with which Heaven has endowed them, they fulfil the mission given them, perhaps to pass unpraised away, leaving it to the vanity of station, or the sycophancy of its adulators, to talk of doing any thing for God.

I shall only further remark on the summary which is given towards the close of this discourse of the duties of royalty, and of the results to be expected from their discharge:

"The word of God, and the history of his providential government, warrant the conclusion that religion is the true secret of national happiness and honour; and the religious state of every country must be greatly influenced by the religion of its rulers. 'Them that honour me,' saith the Lord, 'I will honour.' A steady adherence to the true faith, a determined upholding of that Church which is its depositary and dispenser, a devout use of all its means of grace, a living exemplification of its holy precepts, will bring down upon God's anointed servant an abundant measure of his blessing; will insure to her—and nothing else can insure it—a nation's abiding loyalty and love; and will revive with augmented lustre, under his protection, the ancient but not forgotten glories of a female reign—the glories, not of outward magnificence, nor of successful war, nor of enlarged dominion, but the peaceful and durable glories of internal improvement and stability: faction extinguished, dissensions healed, commerce extended, learning and the arts encouraged, the Church reformed and strengthened, the pure gospel preached to all the people of the land, and the consequent growth of every thing that is lovely and of good report."

Mark here the four cardinal virtues of a royal personage—virtues which are placed on the same level, and taken as constituting altogether the perfection of royal character.

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"A steady adherence to the true faith, a determined upholding of that Church which is its depositary and dispenser, a devout use of all its means of grace, a living exemplification of its holy precepts." Holy life comes in as a fourth part of the moral excellence of royalty, being sorely jostled by adhesion to the Thirty-nine Articles of the orthodox creed, by the determined support of the Church establishment, and by the continuous observance of the external rites and ceremonies enjoined by the Church, and described as "means of grace." What can we say of a moral system which places all these modes of action on the same level—which classes them together—which constitutes them the primary virtues of a character, and on that whole character, so developed, pronounces the blessing of God? This strange commingling, on terms of perfect parity, of a holy life with pertinacity in belief that to be belief must be involuntary, with a state policy in ecclesiastical matters most questionable, and with ceremonial punctiliousness in which there can be no inherent worth, though there is ever great danger of its substitution for that which has,—indicates a lamentable ignorance of any thing like Christian virtue or pure religion, and an utter confusion of the very elements of pure morallty. And for the Deity indeed, as to his blessing on such a course, we may apply the rebuke which the novelist makes Richard bestow on the friar in Sherwood Forest, when he declared he could answer for his patron saint,—"Answer for thyself, priest!" Though surely the presumption of the friar of old, in answering for his saint, was of a lower pitch than that of the modern bishop in affecting to answer for the Deity.

It is promised that this strange quartette of virtues shall insure not only God's blessing, but "a nation's abiding loyalty and love." The one assurance is as rash as the other; for as it seems by no means clear that God's blessing is to be bargained for in the manner proposed, so neither would a nation's loyalty and love be retained without some material addition to, and modification of, the royal attributes of excellence enumerated by the preacher; for the sovereign might possess them in the highest degree, and yet be found miserably wanting in what the state of the country and the spirit of the age imperatively demand; might allow one class to tyrannise over another class, nay,

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to tax its very bread; might obstinately deny political existence, when called for by the extension of intelligence and principle; and on many other accounts, instead of "abiding loyalty and love," only become the object of sullen indifference or of deep aversion.

Nor is the example of Queen Elizabeth, here referred to, altogether so appropriate as to deserve the frequency with which it has been introduced. The greatest glory of Elizabeth's reign is silently passed over—namely, the rightful position into which this country was put by her policy in relation to the rest of Europe; its connection with the struggling in every land for reformation, which was then the struggle for mental as well as political freedom; the sympathy which her government ever manifested with the oppressed against the oppressor, whatever might be the power of the tyranny, in whatever region and under whatever forms it might be exercised. It was eminently during her reign that England took that high and noble position, and thus exercised the prerogative of "teaching the nations how to live." "Learning and the arts," the intellectual splendours of the Elizabethan era, were not the result of her policy: they were glories not given by her but reflected upon her; they were the result of the recent emancipation of the human intellect from spiritual despotism, and of the revival of classical literature, with all its rich stores of thought and feeling that had been so long buried in a darkness deep as that of the grave. They were a blaze of glory that surrounded her policy indeed, but of which that policy was not the fountain. As to the rest, there may be some question whether—completely as the energy of the Tudor queen brought the country beneath her feet—whether such a mode of extinguishing faction and healing dissension is altogether to be desired. It did prevail; it lasted through her own reign, but it lasted very little longer. The strong coercion which Elizabeth exercised led to the revulsion of the great rebellion; the arbitrary principles which, in consequence of the men by whom she was surrounded and the energy of her character, she was able practically to realise, by their very reaction produced the fanaticism of the Puritans; the general desire of political right was extending and deepening itself in men's minds throughout the country; and as soon as her coercive power was relaxed by the hand

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of death, the elements of discord and confusion began to show themselves, and from clamour advanced to conflict, and conflict brought on that catastrophe which shook the altar and the throne to their foundation. Were natural phenomena always to typify mental processes or political results, the head of Charles would have rolled to the base of the statue of Elizabeth. There was already one royal and lovely head upon its pedestal.

Imitation of such a model as this is about as questionable as that of King Josiah. The change of the times, the advance of opinion, all call for the adoption of different modes, and for the exercise of power upon different principles; nor is it, as I have already remarked, by any thing which royalty can achieve personally that the improvement of a nation is to be secured. That must be done by laws, wise, just, humane, and beneficent in their operation; by institutions adapted to the claims of humanity, embracing all classes, overthrowing old feudal distinctions and notions that, whatever their temporary benefit, have long since been outworn, and wrought only mischief, degradation, and wretchedness; by a literature freed from the pressure of arbitrary restrictions, and rendered as independent as possible of the influence of classes or of sordid interests; and by gradually diffusing notions of morality which lead us to identify it with human nature in its highest state of excellence on the one hand, and with the strictest calculations of utilitarianism on the other. When this is done, it may then indeed appear that religion is, as here said, "the true secret of national happiness and honour;" but it is such a religion as royalty cannot command; such a religion as established churches and established priesthoods may labour in vain to generate; such a religion as no laws can fence, nor distinctions, privations, or penalties sustain: not the superstition—the base and grovelling superstition—which is kept up by the performance of ceremonies in which no faith is placed; not the misdirection of that veneration which is so natural and so wholesome to man, from mental and moral qualities, from loftiness of character, to mere loftiness of station: but a religion which is the result of enlightenment; a religion which associates itself with growing views of the beauty and harmony, the wisdom and certainty, of the great providential plan under which we

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live; a religion which will not fail to be found—which, even if not previously implanted, will spontaneously grow—in the soil of the highest civilisation; and that, when it abounds, will make or preserve a people free, brave, and generous, teaching them to consult, in all their arrangements, whether social or individual, only the greatest amount of good to all. The blessings of such a religion, enriching the nation with the largest immediate enjoyment in combination with the brightest prospects, may Providence enable this country to realise during the reign of Queen Victoria!

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MORAL POWER.

WHAT is Moral Power? That is the question which I shall attempt to answer in the present lecture. What is Moral Power? A writer of more philosophical accuracy than generally appertains to political writers or public speakers, and more deserving of reliance for the truthfulness of his arguments and definitions than are many of the class with which I have associated him, has lately said that "Moral Power is only physical force in perspective." In this description there is some truth, and much imperfection. It is true of the lowest kinds of Moral Power, but not true of its loftier and purer manifestations. It is true of an agency by which bad men, possessed of authority, may sometimes be restrained; or by which the ignorant may be guided, or rather, perhaps, driven, into a different course; but it is not true of the influences by which the ignorant are raised towards intelligence, the prejudiced emancipated from their mental shackles, or wisdom and benevolence strengthened for their generous triumphs. It may be true that "Moral Power is only physical force in perspective," when regarded in the unwilling concessions extorted by fear from intolerant statesmen. When the results of long ages of oppression, persecution, and plunder excite the multitude to defiance of law and authority; when their petitions deepen into remonstrance, and remonstrance threatens resistance; when millions band themselves together, to try their strength for the recovery of their rights; and, awed by the menace of civil contest, intolerant principle yields to the coming storm, deprecates the tempest which might wreck society in its wild tumult, and makes a late and ungracious boon of what belongs to conscience and humanity in every region of the earth and in every class of society,—then we behold Moral Power acting only as physical power in perspective. And such is the simple restraint on despotic governments. By this species of Moral Power the nominally absolute authority of Turkish sultan or other autocrat is limited. He knows

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that if he invade certain privileges, if he depart from certain rules of action, consecrated perhaps by the Koran, and established in the minds and customs of the people, tumult will break out, armed bodies may soon surround his palace; he has the bowstring in perspective, by which so many of his predecessors have terminated their reigns and their lives together; and the apprehension of physical violence thus operates with him as Moral Power. He restrains something of the tendencies of absolutism in his own bosom; he becomes, for the purpose to which this influence over him is directed, a representative and popular, if not a just and wise, ruler.

Of many kinds of religious influence, we may truly say that Moral Power is little else or more than physical force in perspective. What else is it with those whose whole creed, whose whole religion, theoretically and practically, seems to be summed up in the dread of future torments—of torments which they realise as of a physical description—the apprehension of a burning lake, and of the scourging and agony to be inflicted on them by the agency of a diabolical spirit? This fear of hell is a "hangman's whip, to keep the wretch in order." There is little or no attraction for such religionists in the spirituality of theology. To them there is no beauty in virtue, or delight in the contemplation of morality, as the means by which happiness may be realised. Dread, low and base dread, a species of physical terror, keeps them out of what they deem unpardonable transgressions, and drives them into a sort of mechanical obedience to the commonly received obligations of piety and morality. With them, too, Moral Power is little more than physical power in perspective. But how many cases are there to which no such description can properly apply, in which it falls infinitely short, and which belong to another and a widely different class of human character and action! We could not apply the definition to many of the incitements by which men pursue what is called glory, seeking it in scientific discovery, mechanical invention, or literary labour, or even amid the sanguinary horrors of the battle-field. We might apply such a definition to the constraint under which the sentinel occupies his station, knowing that if he sleeps on his post, or is negligent, the punishment of death awaits him for the dereliction; and the low

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kind of Moral Power that fixes him there, like a watchful statue, is perhaps fitly described by the expression I have quoted. But not so the appeal, the spirit-stirring appeal, which a commander, looking to the *morale* as well as to the *physique* of his followers, makes to their sense of patriotism or of glory,—as when, on the waves of Trafalgar, Nelson telegraphed his last signal, "England expects every man to do his duty;" or when, on the sandy plains of Egypt, Napoleon exclaimed, "Soldiers, forty centuries look down upon you from the summit of those pyramids."

We cannot apply the assertion that "Moral Power is only physical force in perspective" to that influence of mind or example which descends from age to age, when all power of gratifying with physical good, or of inflicting physical suffering, has long passed away. Not such is the power exercised by the poet or the philosopher in his writings, over countries widely spread and over generations long stretched out. Not such is the influence by which the spirit of either philanthropic or military enthusiasm has been communicated; which made Alexander emulate the character and achievements of Achilles, and which revived again in Cæsar the spirit of Alexander, and in Bonaparte that of Cæsar. Not such are the influences under whose beneficent direction Howard became the practical follower of Him whom he contemplated in the gospels, who went about doing good continually, and consecrated by whose spirit, in a singular episcopacy of love, he numbered all the prisons and hospitals of Europe in the diocese of his merciful visitation. We behold in these something of a much higher description. We see the energy of good as well as that of evil; the power of desire and hope and love, as well as that of apprehension. They all enter into the constituent qualities of Moral Power.

I take the discussion of this subject to be useful, because the terms "Moral Power" have of late been much employed, and they are calculated to excite associations of approval which may not always belong to them; for Moral Power, like physical power or political power, is capable of abuse. It may be the agency of well-being and improvement: it may also be the agency of deterioration, injustice, and suffering. It is a power which involves responsibility; whose exercise must be watched; which we should analyse,

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in order to become aware of the form or direction in which it is most questionable, and also see under what conditions its very existence yields the presumption both of its noble nature and of its wide and enduring utility. For instance: in the combined efforts which are making by large classes in this country, the working classes especially, for the attainment of what they deem their political rights, it is often said, they work with a Moral Power; and the very expression is supposed to convey an approval of the means which they employ, and of the end at which they are aiming. It does no such thing. I do not mean, when I say so, to cast any shade of censure either on the ends which they contemplate or on the means which they use. If it were needful to give any opinion whatever here, I should certainly give that which I entertain—that is, a favourable opinion—an opinion founded in a reliance on humanity, a conviction that to make every one feel the conscious dignity of citizenship is the way to develop more rapidly whatever mental and moral qualities he may possess, the qualities by which individual existence is rendered more happy and dignified, and social union rendered more efficacious for its legitimate and best purposes. But still the aiming at such ends by Moral Power is not in itself any presumption that such will be the result. It is no security against the production of incalculable mischief; for it was by Moral Power, and not by physical energy or political arrangement, that priestcraft held so long its empire over the European mind, over the most enlightened mind in the world; that it subjugated to its yoke some of the strongest individual intellects; that it imposed its routine of forms in the place of moral duties; and often arrayed its ministers triumphantly against all the might of kings and aristocracies. It is Moral Power at this very moment that, while the colonies of England are abolishing the last remnant of negro slavery, and her planters are loosening the bonds of apprenticeship as the chain of slavery had been broken, till at the present moment I believe there does not exist a slave in the British dominions,—it is Moral Power which at this very moment is upholding negro slavery in the southern states of America, that defies the authority of that great union of nations to put it down within those boundaries, and that seems disposed to prolong, if it be not

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destined to perpetuate, an evil towards which humanity cannot look without the deepest shame and the bitterest recollections.

But if the discussion be a useful one, tending to preserve our minds from the liability of being led unwarily into approval by the mere sound of words, it is at the same time not unattended with difficulties. Moral Power is in itself so intangible, so difficult to deal with, so nicely shaded off in its gradations from one species into another, and in the lowest form so nearly identical with physical force, that continual caution is needful in reasoning upon its different characteristics. Mere material cause and effect, physical power, are more easily dealt with. In mechanics we find certain laws which prevail universally, which exemplify themselves from the sand as it is blown along by the wind to the rolling of the planets in their immense orbits, or even to the movements of those larger bodies which are themselves the centres of revolving worlds. The most difficult combinations in mechanics are capable of resolution, until we arrive at the simple facts on which the whole science is founded. Chemical analysis has made a clear and safe advance, so that, becoming gradually acquainted with the properties of different substances, and their results in combination, we may tell with certainty the effects which, under any given circumstances, will be produced. But nothing of this kind takes place with regard to Moral Power. We cannot exhibit its operations as we may those of mechanical power,—that of the steam-engine, for instance. In many cases we cannot accurately say where it begins or where it ends. Its peculiarity is, that it operates through the will, not merely of the agent by whom it is exercised, but of the object on whom it is exercised. Man is sometimes spoken of as constrained by physical force. We can scarcely say this of him, except in extreme cases. We cannot say he is forced to do this or that by the infliction of stripes, by the application of torture, by the dread of death; not as by a physical force; because there have been those who would bear the infliction of stripes, defy the agonies of torture, and triumph at the stake or the scaffold over such inadequate means for subduing the spirit of man. Moral energy in man can resist physical pain up to the very last degree. It was said by Pascal, that a

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conscious reed crushed by the universe would be greater than the universe, because it would be aware of the power that crushed it, while that was unconscious of its own energies; and if we ascribe to it will as well as consciousness, the broken reed becomes a limiting power even to the aggregate force of the material universe.

Will being the agency by which Moral Power operates, it belongs to the relation of man to the inferior animals, as well as to the relation of human beings to each other. Some portion of this metropolis has been of late astonished by the exhibition of animals, remarkable for their ferocious nature, trained to some of the ordinary familiarities of those which are the most domesticated; and there has been speculation as to how this has been accomplished. The explanation would involve the exhibition of a gradation of the inferior orders of Moral Power, for we cannot assume that it would be merely physical power. If the tiger or lion, being safely caged, were beaten to make it perform certain tricks, dictated by its keeper, there might still be the pertinacity of will in the reluctant savage that would defy all such means. Even when it is accomplished in this way, therefore, it is not mere physical force. There is some touch or mixture, some minute blending, of the moral in it. When we suppose the sight of the whip, or other instrument of inflicting pain, to operate by association on the animals, and so induce the performance of different tricks, we then evidently trace Moral Power, though of a low order. But if we suppose a system of training by kindness, by supplying amply the physical wants of fierce and ravenous creatures, and by accustoming them to gentler ways, we then behold Moral Power of a still better description, applicable to the dealings of man with the animal creation. And the same gradations that are applied to the taming of the wild animal, while they show lower degrees of Moral Power, may also guide us in the analysis of it in reference to the operations of human beings upon one another. Those gradations continue until we arrive, in the ascending scale, at influences which ennoble both the object and the agent. In combining all under the term Moral Power, and seeking to ascertain its component parts, it may be described as resolvable into knowledge, persuasiveness, character, perseverance, and union.

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Superiority of knowledge, while it is evidently the source of most of the power possessed by man over the brute creation—while it is that which constitutes the charter of his dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea—is also that by which one man generally achieves dominion or influence over another—at least, any dominion or influence that comes within the compass of our present subject. It was by the power of superior knowledge that the legislators of antiquity, the founders of states, the parents of order and of society, accomplished their great achievements. They found men savages, and they left them civilised; they found them in a state of comparative independence, and therefore of almost ceaseless conflict with one another, acknowledging only the law of the strongest; and they bound them together by law and justice, and raised those temples of order, which, in the Jewish people and the earlier states of antiquity, so impress us with the mental energy of their founders, and which exhibit results so beautiful and great along the course of human history. In them, knowledge was the great source of Moral Power. By no other agency or means of which they were in possession could they ever have realised the supremacy over their fellow-creatures, which operated through their consentient minds to the production of government and social institutions. Knowledge was a main source of the Moral Power possessed by the priesthoods of antiquity and those of later ages. They have often striven to work on men's minds by professedly miraculous exhibitions, that were really derived from a more intimate acquaintance with the secrets of physical nature and with the results of its combinations. From what is recorded of the Egyptian priests, it is evident that they were scientific men; that they understood many principles of which it was long before popular science had the remotest apprehension; and that they knew how to produce phenomena which filled the minds of the ignorant with astonishment, and bowed their knees in veneration before those whom they deemed the agents of preternatural power. And much of this, no doubt, was practised by the Brahmins of India and the Roman-Catholic priests of the middle ages. They had the power, by superior scientific knowledge, of making men's eyes and ears bear testimony

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to the reality of the claims advanced to dominion over their understandings, and insured their spontaneous reverence to the authority thus created or sustained.

But all Moral Power founded on deception is necessarily short-lived, and eventually proves itself to be weakness rather than power; the gradual failure of its influence as knowledge advances, and the revulsion which takes place, exciting antagonism towards that before which the mind had been obliged to succumb. If the Church-of-England clergy really had, or were believed to have, the Holy Spirit, or, according to their own phraseology, the Holy Ghost, in them,—the power of preternatural wisdom and influence, which is professedly communicated by the hands of the bishop in their ordination,—what a class they would be! Who would dare to doubt their assertions, to withstand their assumptions, or to disregard their mandates? If these pretensions were true, they would be the despotic rulers of the country; their words would be oracles in all individual and social concerns. But faith is wanting. It is not superior knowledge, it is only superior arrogance, or mere tradition and conventionalism, that makes the assumption of inspiration; and so it is disregarded as an unmeaning form of words—a mere ceremony, in which the actors understand one another, imposing indeed upon nobody, and kept up as a time-consecrated pathway to spiritual station or pecuniary emolument. If thought of at all by the people, it is only thought of to diminish the influence and respect rendered to those by whom the absurd pretension is still in terms sustained. The merest falsehood ever told for selfish purposes, when successful, may be regarded as a species of Moral Power, inasmuch as for the time it operates upon the faith of the deceived individual, through his reliance—unmerited reliance—on the individual telling the falsehood, or his general regard for the truthful tendencies of human nature. But when once the fraud is detected, that regard is diminished, caution is stimulated, the power passes away, and at last those by whom it has been tried find themselves divested even of the common influence that belongs to the connection between one human being and another; they have frittered away whatever could give them influence upon others, and with it whatever constituted Moral Power in themselves; they reap their punish-

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ment in becoming the feeblest of human beings, and sink into objects of contempt, if not of abhorrence.

Another element of Moral Power is persuasiveness, *i. e.* the possession of faculties, or tendencies to modes of action, which are in themselves adapted to convey the thoughts, purposes, and desires of one being to other beings, and at the same time to excite their sympathy: such as the Tyrtæan songs, whether of old Greece or of modern nations; to the music of which, and chanting their words with an unquenchable enthusiasm, men have gone joyously to the battle-field, perhaps to struggle in desperate conflict, their lives being an almost inevitable sacrifice. Such was the power of the eloquence of Demosthenes when he exposed the designs of Philip to the Athenian multitude; portrayed the danger which threatened the glory of their glorious city, and the freedom of the Grecian states; and poured forth burning thoughts in burning words, that inflamed his hearers with all his own passions and purposes, —till he concluded amid, not shouts of applause for an oratorical gratification, but cries of "To arms!" for the repulse of the ever-encroaching tyrant: and thus he, and other "famous orators,"

> "Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
> Shook the arsenal, and fulmined over Greece
> To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

Some of the discourses of Massillon are said to have produced effects scarcely less remarkable, even though labouring under the common disadvantage of sermons, that of only appealing to invisible objects and spiritual interests. A literature, when properly national, becomes an influence like that of the elements of nature. Thoughts, principles, feelings, spread themselves abroad, as a common intellectual atmosphere, reaching even the most uninformed and unappreciating, and forming the element in which minds "live, move, and have their being." We might adduce instances of this species of Moral Power, of its actual exercise, and of adaptation for its exercise, in great number, from the writings of the apostle Paul—such as that torrent of argumentation which he pours forth in his celebrated chapter, the fifteenth of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, on the resurrection of the dead; or such as his well-known delineation of charity, to which a response has ever been

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found in the minds and hearts of those by whom his epistles have been studied, however much it may have been counteracted by the opposite tendency of their own faith and forms; or such as that sublime address to the assembled Athenians on Mars' Hill, where he appeals to their own poets, to the dictates of natural reason, and the discoveries of revelation, to win them to a more distinct recognition of the Divine Spirit to which they had raised an altar as "the Unknown God." Or we might refer to the messengers of the Sanhedrim, sent to apprehend Christ, pausing awhile in their mission to listen to his discourses, and, instead of doing the bidding of their employers, returning to them with the exclamation of "Never man spake like this man!"

Another and most important element of Moral Power is Character. The state of character is the test of Moral Power in the individual. What most deserves the name of character is, when the different faculties of the mind and heart are proportionately developed, so that memory, and imagination, and judgment, and social and individual feeling, and the active principles of our nature, all hold their due course, and so blend, that we may say to all the world, "This was a man." And whenever this harmonious combination, this proportionate development, takes place, there is not only a beautiful object of contemplation in the person himself,—we not only see that which gives us similar sensations to the perfection of an ancient statue, or that of the construction of an epic or dramatic poem,—but we behold that which has power as well as beauty, which by its very existence exercises influence, which is in fact an incarnation of Moral Power. There are those who have only to live in order to be influential. They act unconsciously; they influence because they are. It is not necessary that they should form to themselves great purposes of affecting others; that they should deliberately say to themselves, "I will act in such and such a way, upon such and such a person, or upon any collection or class of persons in society:" they have only to hold on their own consistent, beautiful, and harmonious course; when the ear heareth them, then it blesseth them; and the eye that seeth them will bear witness to them; and the heart that admires will come spontaneously and unconsciously under

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the power of their example. This is a power of which the lowest in station, and the obscurest, may be possessed; of which they must be possessed, if they are really fashioning the faculties and powers of their own nature into the harmony for which they were intended by the Creator. It is such a power as this that makes the followers of an unfortunate and exiled chief adhere to him amid all his reverses and sufferings, when there is an end of all anticipation of rewards which he can bestow or of punishment which he can inflict. It was such a power as this that made the Roman conspirators so anxious to grace their conspiracy with the name of Brutus, and give it that character of public virtue and disinterestedness which they felt would be implied in the mere accession of his name:

> "Oh, he sits high in all the people's hearts:
> And that which would appear offence in us,
> His countenance, like richest alchemy,
> Will change to virtue and to worthiness."

It was this power which made the Roman people consider the voice of Cato as equivalent or superior to what, by events, they were taught to construe as the decision of their gods. It was this power of character that surrounded Socrates in prison with his admiring friends and disciples. Gratitude alone was not the principle which brought them there, nor, certainly, any anticipation of worldly good that he would ever have the power to bestow upon them. They came there from love. They gathered around the individual whom they loved for himself, whom for what he was in himself they venerated, and whose dying words they chronicled with a holy reverence. We feel this power in contemplating many of the characters of sacred history. This was the strength of the testimony which Abraham bore to pure Monotheism. It made him the father of the faithful. The patriarch Abraham was not a missionary; he was not a proselytist; he did not go about the world seeking to destroy, even by persuasion, any or every form of worship that did not agree with his own notions. He undertook nothing of the kind. There is no record of his interfering with the doctrines, or with the worship, or with the gods, of his contemporaries. He merely professed his own more enlightened views; he and his household adhered to them; and so he wandered over the wide extent of

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country that was to become the inheritance of his descendants, simply bearing testimony,—and, by the effect of his unobtrusive profession, being one of the most powerful disseminators of truth that the old world ever witnessed. And this makes the charm of him who was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, identifying Christ with Christianity.

To these qualities we add only those of perseverance and union. The Moral Power of perseverance in the individual is one to which it is difficult to affix any limits. How often has good prevailed against evil, by the mere strength and continuity of its submission to pain, insult, and injury! The continuance in a course of kindness, unfailing kindness, sooner or later makes itself felt upon the hardest dispositions. It induces their selfishness to relax, it wins them to something of a better state of feeling; and with bodies of men, this is an essential element of all peaceful operations, for the assertion of privileges or the achievement of the victories of truth and justice, in legislation or political institutions. And while most of those which I have enumerated are individual qualities, but also applying to social bodies, when we advert to the latter, union must be introduced as another essential. The power of determined union is scarcely to be baffled unless by physical impossibilities. The alchemists of the middle ages were distinguished by an extraordinary degree of perseverance; they did not accomplish their purpose: so far Moral Power failed; but, in the continuance of their attempts, they accomplished what was really much greater than their own purpose. They made those various discoveries, incidentally and independently, which afterwards being combined, laid the foundation of chemical science. Cortez and his companions were strong in the Moral Power of union, when they solemnly pledged themselves on the holy sacrament to the conquest of the newly discovered empires of the Transatlantic world. And Dr. Carey and his associates were also strong in the Moral Power of union, when they determined on a mission to the heathen, and, without pecuniary means, or government patronage, or even the assurance of public support, commenced a series of exertions which will take their place in history amongst the most striking achievements of individual religious zeal, gradually

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extending to numbers and accumulating in materials; showing what even the fewest and humblest may achieve, if they enter upon it in the faith and devotedness and union from which Moral Power results.

There is another mode in which union generates Moral Power, and that is in the influence of political freedom and equality upon individual patriotism. In proportion as "sovereign law" is the "state's collective will," or is believed to be so, and consequently its wisdom and justice are recognised, will the members of a community be devoted to their country. Hence the patriotism of antiquity; that, and whatever most akin to it has been realised in modern times; the disposition which made the Greek and Roman think nothing of toil and privation, the loss of property or of life, so that he could serve his country, and contribute, by the devotion of all that he possessed and of all that he was, to its glory and perpetuity; the disposition which, prolonged to and reflected in modern times, made the French sailors, at the commencement of the revolutionary war, as their ships went down amid the roaring of the waves and the roaring of the cannon, shout "Vive la République!" the Republic which could no longer recompense or punish, which at that moment was only to them a word or thought,—but a word or thought of power, for it was the symbol of an equal social union, commanding therefore their dying breath, as they descended into their majestic grave, the mighty ocean, which long would bear the memory of their deaths inscribed, as it were, on its eternal surface. And patriotism, with its heroic devotion, may be generated in the human bosom, wherever society is constructed so as to make all feel, to their heart's core, that the good of all is the object of institutions, and that their tendency is especially to ameliorate the physical, mental, and moral condition of the most numerous classes.

If we regard these several elements,—knowledge, persuasiveness, character, perseverance, and union,—we shall see that they apply to the different gradations, already specified, of Moral Power; and also that, as it rises through these gradations, its character advances from being questionable, to being unquestionably good. The lowest operation is through fear, terrifying with the prospect of physical evil in this world, or of continued suffering in the world

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to come. This has little tendency to elevate the mind either of the agent or of the object; it is in some sort a brutalising of both, by the coarseness of the means employed. But this is the poorest and lowest kind of Moral Power. Its next step makes a grand advance, by calling in the agency of hope; by doing that with the expectancy of good, which some are content to do with only the apprehension of evil. There is something more pure, generous, useful, exalting, by far, in the anticipation of good, than in the mere deprecation of evil. Accordingly, we find churches, societies, individuals, that are governed on this principle, present objects to be contemplated with far more complacency than those which simply keep out disorder by the application of terror. The third and highest stage is that neither of fear nor of hope, but of love; of the exhibition of moral loveliness, inducing its reflected likeness; when the individual grows in knowledge, goodness, and enjoyment, and developes harmoniously every faculty of his mental and moral constitution, merely by having presented to him the highest, purest, and best phases of those faculties. The process is analogous to that which the apostle has described as resulting from the devout contemplation of the Divine perfections: "We all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

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ON THE RECENT ATTEMPTS

TO STIMULATE

A SPIRIT OF FANATICISM AND PERSECUTION

IN THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THERE has been of late an unwonted stir amongst the clergy and partisans of the church by law established. The long dormant thunders of the ecclesiastical courts have been invited to utter their voices; crusading missions against Popery stimulate and direct the fervour of multitudes; newspapers teem with theological discussions and vituperation; in default of an inquisition or a censorship, literary criticism writes in gall its *Index Expurgatorius;* the voice of rebuke is frequent and loud at episcopal visitations; the dykes of sectarian demarcation are widened and deepened over the face of the land, conveying every where a full stream of bitter animosity; troops of clergymen grace with their presence, and animate by their exhortations, the gatherings of political partisans; and while they consecrate with their benedictions the banners of electioneering strife, the libations of lay piety are freely poured on the altar of legal orthodoxy. These phenomena are something new in the world, though, like other seeming irregularities, they are by no means inexplicable.

Were they merely the symptoms of enthusiastic zeal in a sect which interfered not with the rights and privileges of others; in this activity were it always remembered what is due from man to his neighbour, to his opinions and character, to his enjoyments and prospects,—much might be allowed to pass by without reproof; and some things, for their assumed motive, perhaps might obtain approbation: but the proceedings referred to involve the comforts of individuals to so large an extent, and so materially interfere with the peace and well-being of society, that we may well be excused for directing our attention to them, scrutinising

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their causes, estimating their character, and speculating on their tendency.

The ordinary condition of an established and endowed church is one of external decency, conventional propriety, formality, stateliness, and a tolerant laxity. It is little disposed to persecute, so long as it is let alone. There is not sufficient malignity in human nature to make the abstract pleasure of persecution a remuneration for the trouble. Nor has it the usual religious motives to exertion. An established priesthood is a profession, not a mission. Its candidates find therein the subsistence, the honour, or the emolument which they desire; and they are therewith content. The clergyman is yet living who testified to the favour in which the text, "be not righteous overmuch," was held by his brethren. Pity, for the world's peace, that the "not" has become obsolete, without a more rational interpretation being found for the "righteous." As it stood, it was a very appropriate motto. An unmolested establishment never preaches or prays overmuch; never admonishes the great overmuch; and never overmuch invades the slumberings of society. It has no internal impulses. The stimulus of its energy, whether for proselyting or persecuting, or both, must come from without.

And from without, at intervals, it does come. Successful enthusiasts, whom the church had vainly endeavoured to repress by its frown, stir or sting it into rivalry. The contagion of zeal affects the more earnest of the clergy. The politically prudent are startled at the formation of large sectarian bodies beyond their own pale. The inert are shamed into an awkward emulation. There is a competition for the influence which the innovators acquire with the multitude by the reputation of sanctity. After a due period of scorning, sneering, nicknaming, and annoying, ecclesiastical superciliousness itself grows methodistical or evangelical; takes to catechisms, prayer-book societies, missions; and runs the race of rival godliness. Zeal springs up from the reaction of non-established, but popular, sectarianism.

If the general progress of intelligence be not always carefully watched and promptly obstructed by the drowsy priesthood of an establishment, yet the alarm is sure to

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be taken when any particular symptom of that progress becomes strongly marked. Not more immediately evident to the Church of Rome was the danger of the doctrine of the antipodes for the souls of philosophers, than to the Church of England the danger of reading, writing, and arithmetic for the children of the poor. A priesthood has an instinctive dread of the advance of knowledge, whether in the higher truths that engage the speculative, or the elementary information that is diffused among the multitude. Almost all religionists with whom orthodox belief is a primary article, whether that belief be deemed needful for the salvation of souls or for the security of endowments, have acuteness enough to perceive the natural incompatibility of mental activity with uniformity of faith. Dissenters talk of "unsanctified knowledge" in tones of serious deprecation. A large latitude of speculation is, indeed, allowed by an establishment to those philosophers whose maxim is, to think with the wise, and talk or act with the vulgar; who neither avowedly dissent nor popularly attack; who wear a veil of conformity, though it be perfectly transparent: but when intellect prepares, like an athlete, to grapple with the fallacies of theology, politics, and morals—when "many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased"—then may it be predicted with certainty, that an established church is about to become extraordinarily zealous.

A third cause of zeal in an establishment is apprehension of the invasion of its revenues, especially from the advance of popular influence in the government. Priesthoods have ever been jealous of popular rights, and antagonists of democracy. They have ever apprehended its trenching upon the endowments and emoluments of which they are in possession. There is, no doubt, some reason for the apprehension. The history of modern Europe is, to a large extent, a catalogue of political convulsions and revolutions; and when has it happened, in what country has there been a popular revolution, in which the funds that had been accumulated in the possession of the ecclesiastical authorities have not been invaded in some way or other, and made to subserve the purposes of public expenditure? In fact, the danger of priesthoods has always been the tendency of their wealth to increase inordinately. Among

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the causes which led to what is called the Protestant Reformation this holds a conspicuous place. The cupidity was excited of royalty, and then of the aristocracy. The first was in some measure satiated by the plunder that was immediately gained, and the influence acquired, by a professed change of religion; and the aristocracy secured for itself, in addition to an ample share of the original spoil, a permanent provision, by keeping open the doors of the church at all times, for its advance therein to the highest and most profitable stations. But a representative government ever tends to make all questions money questions. That has especially been the case in this country. And, with the growth of democratical influence in legislation, alarm has always been felt lest that influence should be directed to reclaim revenues regarded to a large extent as sinecures, and generally held without any proportion to the services with which they are nominally connected.

These influences of religious rivalry, growing intelligence, and threatened possessions, combined, at the time of the Reformation, to make the Catholic Church so persecuting as it then showed itself. It is absurd to suppose that the character of the Roman-Catholic priesthood is from any innate cause more fierce and sanguinary than that of any other priesthood. There was a large license of speculation allowed in the members of that church and in its priests and prelates, so long as they were mere speculations, the innocent reveries of learned men. It was in the conjunction which took place just previously to the Reformation; in the irregular zeal of the first reforming preachers; the growing influence of the people upon government and its affairs; and the obvious advance of mind, becoming rich in the stores of classic learning then first brought to light, every day making fresh discoveries in natural science, and receiving a mighty impulse from this and other influences to that forward and rapidly progressive course which it has ever since held,—it was the union of these that alarmed the Catholic Church for its own safety, that excited it to put forth the powers which it possessed, dictated its anathemas, opened its dungeons, and lit up its flames for heretics.

And is there not now a similar combination acting upon the Church of England? Has there not been an

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abundance of dissenting zeal to excite it to rivalry? Missions to the heathen, Bible and tract societies, proselyting associations at home, however they may have become common both to the Church and Dissenters, originally bore that dissenting character which remains strongly marked upon them; and as connected with the Church, they are more indicative of reaction than of original purpose. The multiplication of books, of cheap publications, of newspapers, and the extension of education, such as it is, have in our own days gone beyond all precedent; while for the last few years, at least since the passing of the Reform Act, there has been a stronger popular influence in the legislature; and matters connected with the Church, tithes, church-rates, &c., have been topics of frequent agitation. Here, then, we may see the union that excited the Roman-Catholic Church to violent persecution in the time of the Reformation, existing now, and acting in an analogous manner upon the Church of England.

But an established church has not the advantage, nor does it exhibit the congruity, of a voluntary sect, in its zealous endeavours. It has within itself no peculiar principle of spiritual life; at least, the Church of England is not the shrine of any particular modification of spiritual life. Hence its efforts, however violent, are desultory and inconsistent. What is there, what mode of spiritual being, that peculiarly belongs to the Church of England, by which it may endeavour to act upon the minds of the multitude, and to realise a new moral creation? The Calvinistic sects have their mode of religious life in the intellectuality of their system. I do not mean the rationality of its foundation, or of its particular tenets; but, taking the assumption on which they build, Calvinism is a coherent, and therefore a powerful, intellectual system: hence it lays hold of the mind with a more iron grasp than any other creed. It stands or falls entirely. It is fixed and riveted together as a whole, however demonstrable and gross may be the absurdities into which that very consistency, according to their own modes of reasoning, has led its authors. But the Church cannot produce an intellectual form of spiritual being by its own creeds. Those creeds have none of the consistency of dissenting Calvinism. They are gathered together from a great diversity

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of sources; they are the results of different ages, often only indicating antagonism to the peculiar and ever-varying heresies of those ages; they are a compromise between the different theological parties which at the time of the Reformation divided the country; they are neither consistently Calvinistic nor consistently Arminian; they are, in fact, a mere hodge-podge, or medley of articles of faith, which must utterly cripple the body by which they are professedly held from any such exertion as that which Calvinism instigates by the firm logical cohesion of its manifold absurdities.

Methodism is strong in its appeal to the feelings; it is the religion of emotion; it places the soul of spirituality in "experience"—in going through certain states of feeling vividly marked, strongly contrasted, and bearing the individual along upon the tossing waves of contrary sensations, which yet together hold on one powerful course to the end of his being. But the Church, with its minutely defining Articles, with its cold formalities, with its ceaseless repetition of worn-out prayers and of unmeaning praises, with its language rendered so familiar as to fall upon the ear without ever touching the thoughts or sinking into the heart—the Church can have no fitness for stimulating spiritual life by the exhibition of religion as a succession of emotions. The proud frigidity of its system leaves the heart as unwarmed and unfilled as the area of its own stately cathedrals.

The contemplative form of spiritual being belongs to the Quakers. They have endeavoured to realise the perfection of meditative religion, waiting for the influx of God's influences, allowing the thoughts to take their own silent course till they pass into a holy reverie, "choosing the channels where they flow," sure of shaping their current so as to reach at last the ocean of eternal peace and rest. The Church has as little of a meditative character as it has of one of thought or feeling. It is altogether external: it directs us ever to that which is without—to forms which are to be practised, to prayers which are to be repeated, to confessions of faith and descriptions of duty, part of the virtue of which seems to consist in their being specified in the very same terms from generation to generation.

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Even the sensuous mode of religion—that which acts artistically on the human frame and constitution—is preoccupied. The Catholic Church has produced its painted and sculptured forms, its solemn or inspiring chants, its imposing rites and processions. It erected buildings admirably adapted to secure their full effect upon the minds of the multitude. But the Church of England, which might be expected most of all to compete with it in this, neither has had, nor ever will have, its Raffaelle or its Michael Angelo; and the great masters of sacred music, whose names are connected with it, were only an accident in its history. Some of their noblest compositions lie rotting in the dust of unexplored closets in the corners of University libraries. They are brought forth now and then by individual exertion, and offered to the public; but the Church itself, holding with a niggard hand whatever it can grasp, makes a sinecure even of sacred song, defrauding its great masters of their fame, the public of a paid-for delight, and their Deity of his noblest praises. Possessed of no element of spiritual life, when stirred up to zeal it seems not to know what zeal is; but lays hold of one point in one direction, of another in another, alike unreasonably violent upon all. The very diversity shows that there is no one pure, simple, and true principle at work as the life of these different manifestations.

Of what do they consist? We find something like a theological crusade preached against that Romish Church to which the Church of England bears a closer affinity than any other Church in the world. Ceaseless attacks are made on the Irish system of education, under the pretext that it does not put the entire Bible into the hands of every child instructed in the schools patronised by government. And what judicious parent ever does enforce the attention of his child to every portion of the entire Bible? The Jews, who were the first recipients of the sacred volume, while they were yet visited by the influences that dictated its composition, kept back one book at least from their offspring till they attained the age of thirty. It is no derogation from that glorious volume to say that it is by no means constructed as a primer for infant-schools; nor does the outcry against withholding the whole Bible from children, even those Catholic children who, of course, in the

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Protestant version are unwilling to receive it, attract any complacency from the fact that, until of late, the same body has opposed itself to the dissemination of the Bible among adults unless it were accompanied by the Prayer-book, on account of the inability of unlearned adults to comprehend the mysteries of the holy volume.

On a recent occasion a number of children were refused the rite of confirmation—deemed so important by the Established Church—because they had only been taught their duty to God and their neighbour. As if that which Christ declares to be the summary of human duty was worthless compared with the parroted answers of the Catechism on sacramental mysteries, in a candidate for admission into the Church of England! Perhaps, in the case to which I allude, it was not merely on their own account that the children were disgraced, but an opportunity was taken thereby of enforcing ecclesiastical discipline, and of preaching one doctrine which the Church holds more dear than most doctrines—that of the subserviency of the inferior grades of the clergy to their ecclesiastical superiors.

Praying for the dead is a heresy which the Church has deemed it needful in one instance to encounter, and that by the aid of an authority which it would have well become a civilised country long since to have abolished. Appeal has been made to the preposterous anomaly of a court sitting in judgment on the well-being of the souls of individuals. But if an object of attack was to be found, surely this is the last that should have been selected. So much is it the impulse of nature to pray for the souls of the departed, that it has almost always found its way into practical religion, even amongst those who have repudiated it in the form of doctrine. There seems no reason why prayer should not be offered for the dead as well as for the living. If it be said that their state is fixed by the Deity, what is there, if we allow the divine prescience and universal providence, that is not fixed by him? What can we ask for the living that is not as certain in his purpose and plan as any thing that we can ask for the dead? But from the Church itself the incongruity is curious, possessing as it does, in its monumental riches, so many inscriptions to the same effect, some of them appended to the tombs of its own bishops, and others conspicuous over

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the entrances and halls of its colleges,—which very colleges, with their ample endowments, were raised and bequeathed to the public on the tenure that the souls of their founders should be prayed for through all succeeding generations!

The manner in which two prelates of the Established Church have been lately dealt with has occupied too large a portion of the public attention for it to be passed over in silence—I mean the Bishops of Durham and of Norwich; the vituperations which they have drawn upon themselves from a part of the public press, and the formal notice taken by their own clergy—unaccustomed, assuredly, to call their bishops to account—for merely having given, or being supposed to have given, their names and subscriptions to a volume of practical and moral sermons, by an individual of a dissenting community and of Unitarian opinions. Now, proceedings of this description really lead to the destruction of all the civilities and courtesies of life. As to being committed to an author's opinion by such subscription, the idea is too absurd, I apprehend, for any body to discuss it in earnest. The practice has been much too common for any such notion to be possible; and it is one mark of this being a factitious zeal, rather than a real jealousy about doctrinal truth, that such things have been done over and over again, without any one thinking of blame or of comment till very lately indeed. I do not allude to any thing so far back as fifty years ago, or to the list of prelates and ecclesiastical dignitaries that appear in the list of subscribers to the publications of Dr. Lardner, with all the heresies which those publications contained; but it is only six or seven years since the writings of another dissenter—I mean of the late Robert Hall—were published, having also two bishops in the list of subscribers, one of them in a most important station, the head of our governmental religious institution in the East Indies; and their names backed by those of a number of clergymen, and of fellows and heads of colleges, although his works contain more strong and vigorous rebukes and denunciations of the Church of England than can ever be thought likely to come from so mild and moderate a pen as that of Mr. Turner of Newcastle.

One of the most oddly timed and intrepidly chosen topics of vituperation is that of the statement, by men of science, of geological facts and their obvious inferences.

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Clerical journalists, and their political allies, forget that if a stand was to have been made for the physical philosophy of Moses, it should have been made on the publication of the *Principia*, and the brand affixed on Sir Isaac Newton. They forget that the stand actually was made, in the case of Galileo; and they rant and rave about floods and fossils as wildly as if science were still subject to the dictation of priests, and as fiercely as if, instead of only ignorantly calumniating for the purpose of social injury, they could command the racks and dungeons of the Inquisition. The instinctive hatred to science of systems which "love darkness rather than light," as the means of regaining or perpetuating their own domination, has rarely been more strikingly exemplified.

In the formation of associations,—in the employment of the vulgar arts of proselyting societies,—in the attempts every where to proportion the provision of churches and of clergymen, not to those who in any proper sense belong to the Church of England, but to the whole extent of the population, which population seeks not such buildings for its own use, nor requires such preaching for its own instruction,—in these we behold merely an external and forced agency, which seems much less to bear a religious character than to be part of a system for building up a strong political influence. The language usually held at the political meetings, so numerously attended by the clergy, on behalf of the Church is, that it is "the poor man's Church," as if spontaneousness and earnestness and activity, and the extent of its own efforts in the instruction of the poor, had ever given it the claim to any such name—as if the poor had not been indebted, at the outset altogether, to the exertions of men who, if they were in the Church, were obliged virtually to leave it—who more frequently arose out of the Church—and who brought to their door that bread of life for the want of which they might have remained in a state of spiritual starvation, had their only resource been in the granaries of the Establishment. Now, missions to the poor, in city and country, may be graced with ecclesiastical names; but before these exertions were stimulated by competition, when and how was the cottage of the poor man visited, unless for the sake of noting the tithe that could be taken of his apple-tree;

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or when did churches open for religious service, without showing in all the arrangement of their pews, and in whatever was obvious of their order, that the distinctions of rank and the spirit of aristocracy had here their dwelling-place and their temple, though originally consecrated in the name of Him who said, "All ye are brethren"?

And these different topics have come before the public in the language of insolence and fierce rebuke—in expressions tending to wound the feelings and to injure the character—with a recklessness that dares to sit in judgment upon men's hearts and consciences, that speaks familiarly and profanely of their spiritual and eternal condition, and, while it denounces their prospects in heaven, cuts the bonds of good neighbourhood on earth. Animosities are excited that spread from parish to parish over the whole face of the land, and the tendency of which is to bring on a fierce collision that would end—if apparently it were to end according to the wishes of those who endeavour to excite the strife—in harrying all honest men out of the land. And this commotion—this movement in the great dormitory, as an established church usually is—has not arisen, like the natural progress of fanaticism, from the ignorant multitude. It has not come upward from the many. It has not been a demonstration on the part of those who had more zeal than knowledge, and whose earnestness might be supposed sometimes to show itself in a way that would not be approved by their more intelligent teachers. It is not a spontaneous movement of zeal in the members of the Church of England generally. It comes from priests and prelates and political partisans. It is not an ebullition of fanaticism. It is an attempt to create or stimulate fanaticism. It is a frenzy into which people are to be persuaded, and towards which incessant attempts are made at their persuasion. The violence with which it is advocated outruns any sympathy of feeling, and therefore presages the failure which its altogether factitious and iniquitous character deserves. We find it always in connection with one political party. Whatever the diversity of its character, and however remote that character from any thing like a genuine demonstration of religious zeal, it still has consistency of another kind in its manifestations and its objects, and a uniformity in its direction that is never devi-

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ated from. This is not like the history of any real ebullition of fanatic zeal; it is not like the demonstration on record of any species of genuine zeal. Look at the annals of missionary efforts; trace the rise of sects, such as those of the Methodists, whether of Whitfield or of Wesley; mark the way in which George Fox, in his wild preachments and prophesyings, created the Quaker denomination; or go back to the history of earlier times—read of the sects of antiquity, or see how the first Christian preachers pursued their course. In all these one spiritual idea was ever uppermost—one great religious purpose ever in their minds. If a variety of topics were introduced into their preachings, still there was the same spirit—there was the same tendency in all these topics. Whether they addressed themselves to Jew or Gentile—from morning to night, in the city or in the country—every where this one religious thought pervaded all with a uniformity of spirit. It might be the atonement, or the light within, or the mission of Christ; still this was what they bore abroad in the world—what they called on all the winds of heaven to waft to the remotest regions, and in which they lived and moved and had their being. There was none of the diversity—none of the incongruity—none of the inconsistency with truth, with reason, with Christianity, and with themselves—which we trace in the list of topics that has just been gone over, and which have all their place in the outbreakings of modern episcopal and politico-theological zeal.

The Church of England is not based on the repudiation of prayers for the dead. Sorely has the Church of England been belied by its priests and bishops, if putting the entire Bible into the hands of every man, woman, and child be really an essential point in its plan of salvation. The Articles of the Church of England do not really require any interdict upon the discoveries of geology. Whatever may be made the condition of juvenile confirmation, it is questionable whether the whole Catechism could be repeated with verbal correctness by every ordained priest and deacon of the Church of England. Neither its recent hatred of heresy, nor its yet more recent regard for the poor, belongs to the being of the Church of England. And yet on all these miscellaneous incongruities it shouts as lustily and as polemically as

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ever did the Puritans, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" And whole tribes of sophists and calumniators, apologists of oppression, war, duelling, bribery, intimidation, and every species of political vice and conventional religion, join in the battle-cry! The whole thing is factitious. It is got up for selfish and sordid ends. It bears the aspect of an attempt, and not a spontaneous effervescence; of temporal objects, and not spiritual ones; in short, of the combination of the priesthood of the Church with a party in the state to secure its emoluments and honours to the one, and to obtain political power for the other. And alas for the Church, and alas for the party, that can use such means for such or for any purposes! What is there more fearful or disgusting than the deliberate fabrication of so dangerous, so mischievous, so miserable a weapon for any set of men to employ, as a fanatical and persecuting spirit—a spirit excited in one portion of the people to be exercised by them upon the other? Can men know what they are about, or ever seriously think of what they are about, in doing this? They carry strife into neighbourhoods and households; they bring, not "a sword upon the earth," but a poisoned dagger; they call the worst fiend of hell to rage and ravage in the name of the gospel of peace; they set one against another in that bitterest of all bitter feelings, theological animosity; they become the missionaries of hatred and confusion; and all to gratify a poor and pitiful worldly purpose. Were such endeavour to become successful, what would be the result? It must produce—it is in some degree producing—a reaction, perhaps scarcely less to be deprecated than itself. The fanaticism of an endowed sect stimulates the fanaticism of unendowed sects: it makes religion a signal of conflict every where; all individuality of thought and feeling is overborne by the torrent of these meeting streams of enthusiasm; and no resting-place is left for those who, simply pursuing the truth, desire to learn whatever can be learned of the Deity in his ways and works, instead of dogmatising on his nature and attributes, and sorting out their fellow-creatures into the saved and damned eternally. In the collision, civil liberty is like to fare but badly. Where theological interests are at stake, sects are but too regardless of the just claims of

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humanity. The tendency is to turn the land into a den of intolerable tyranny—of mental and social, as well as ecclesiastical and political, tyranny; until civil and religious liberty, with all the blessings that belong to them, sink into the pit that sordid partisans have dug before our eyes, and foul eclipse passes over all that is best and brightest in national character.

There is too much of intelligence and principle in the country for such a catastrophe as that. Free thought is not so easily put down; it has only to rally to its duty, and the boisterous clamour will be checked. Mitred heads may bow timorously and ignominiously to the passing storm; those with less costliness of adornment are less exposed to danger. Those who have no recantations to make at the bidding of others; who have learned how innocuous is calumny; who balance no external injury with the consciousness of baseness; to whom individuality is precious, and who recognise the equal rights of others, and desire their exercise by all; who easily penetrate through all the trickery of priestcraft and faction,—they will hold on their bold and honest course; and, in the spirit of the greatest and noblest men that our country has produced, who often had in like manner to contend with like evils, they may not only save their own souls, but perchance be the salvation of their country also. This unworthy attempt to foster a fanatical spirit will, it is to be hoped, hasten the union of all good men and sound politicians in the cause of Church reform—that thorough Church reform which alone can correct such evils and prevent their recurrence. Not a mere change in the boundary of parishes or the extent of dioceses, or in the rate of remuneration for the different orders of the clergy; not the extension of an established sect by the inclusion of any other sect, or such an adjustment as shall place different denominations in a state of relative power and influence with which they are satisfied; not a mere letting things alone, as in America, where, by that negative process, religion falls into the hands of a set of unendowed but sectarian priesthoods, all striving for influence, and producing a state of bigotry and social persecution against free thought and its free expression not less intolerable than any oppression which is realised under the old despotisms of Europe;—but a Church reform

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which shall go to the very root of the evil, and unsectarianise the country in its influence, rather than embody and uphold sectarianism by a compromise between the interests of different denominations. We cannot let alone the state of religion here if we would. The munificence of our Roman-Catholic ancestors has left immense funds which are properly the people's heritage, a provision for the spiritual culture of the entire population. These funds should no longer be a sectarian monopoly: they are a civilising power, unparalleled in the world's history, and should be applied to their legitimate purpose, so as to raise the nation in its mental and moral condition. Combining the school and the ecclesiastical endowments, all so inefficiently used, or so shamefully abused, there is a revenue of unascertained millions per annum, of which not the minutest fraction can justly be sacrificed to class cupidity, or cast into the swamp of political expenditure. Its existence intact, and its wise direction, are amongst the deepest responsibilities of the legislature.

And what might it not accomplish? Schools might be built and endowed for the training of all classes and of all ages, from the earliest to the maturest at which school instruction is received; a training intellectual, industrial, artistical, moral, that should put within the grasp of each the means of individual happiness, and insure from all the duties of citizenship. Institutes, libraries, museums, colleges, might open wide their gates to all, proffering the materials of mental aliment, with an invitation free as that which religion gave by its prophet of old, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye and drink of the waters of life freely." Support in their vocations might be guaranteed to those, always commercially unremunerated, on whom Providence, by the gift of genius, or of scientific industry, or of the philosophic spirit, bestows its own ordination of priests and preachers for the blessing of mankind. And while the contentious votaries of theological technicalities were left to pursue their own objects by their own resources, different modes of worship might succeed each other, with no inharmonious diversity, in the ancient and consecrated structures which are common property; or perhaps some form might be found, so simple and yet so comprehensive, so rational and yet so devout, as to appeal to the

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heart of humanity itself for a response, and vindicate its claim to common nationality. Such a reform would identify the nation with the Church, and religion with men's thoughts, duties, and vocations. The sinister interests of sects would succumb before the great common interest of intellectual and moral culture; and the petty disputes of sects would pass into merited oblivion. The name of religion would no longer be disgraced by the dogmatism and quibblings in which it is now made to consist; nor by the fanaticism and persecution which hypocrisy now invokes for its pretended support. The national character would rise towards the moral dignity of the most illustrious worthies whom it has produced; and the Christianity of this better reformation be manifest in its tendency to promote glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will among men.

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RELIGIOUS EQUALITY.

THE "Plan of a General Union for the Promotion of Religious Equality" has recently been put into circulation. I fear that the manner in which this plan is concocted is by no means such as to afford the best presage of realising its professed end. In a recent lecture "On the Attempts to excite a Spirit of Fanaticism and Persecution in the Church of England," I adverted to the probability of reaction; to the fact that fanaticism in one religious body tends to its generation in other religious bodies; and that especially the fanaticism of an endowed and established sect may be expected to increase the amount and embitter the spirit of fanaticism in sects which are not endowed nor established. While regretting any instance of this species of reaction, there yet are some points of view in which perhaps a looker-on may not deprecate the formation of such associations or unions as that now projected. In the collision of parties good may result to the community; a formidable barrier may be raised to the encroachments of a Church which, being strong in the possession of state emoluments and dignities, is but too apt to encroach upon, if not entirely to suppress, the religious liberty of others; and if the repression of its claims within the limits of moderation be not entirely secured, some important steps in advance towards it may undoubtedly be gained. But there is no worse heresy against morality than that the end sanctifies the means, especially in political struggles, or those which are called religious. I am therefore disposed to moot the question in the present lecture, What constitutes religious equality? and to show wherein the parties putting forth this plan seem to me to have widely mistaken, or fallen short of, the object which they propose.

One of the primary objects mentioned in the plan is "To secure an efficient coöperation between the friends of religious liberty in the British empire, in defence of their common rights and privileges." This is assuredly a very good object—a most important one. The enemies of reli-

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gious liberty are certain to combine: they do so from the very nature of the case, whether they be the religious enemies to religious liberty, or the political enemies to religious liberty. Both classes are very numerous. The religious enemies of religious liberty are united in all churches or sects which—either from the intolerance of their creeds, or the despotism of their discipline, or their connection with temporal interests and political authority—are put in a state of antagonism to conscientious freedom of thought and of speech in their own members or in the community, whether that antagonism be evinced in an exclusive creed, denouncing anathemas upon those who do not receive its dogmas; or be manifested in prescribed forms rather than by articles of faith; or in the arrangement of offices, so that all power descends, instead of rising, as it should, from the people; or in practical regulations by which the members are obliged to restrain the thought that is in them, and to conform their language and manners to the dictates of the power by which they are surrounded; or whether they wield the force of law and the terrors of government. In all these cases there is a church tyranny, established or non-established, which makes that body a natural foe to religious liberty, and leads to combined exertions against it, such as may, in certain emergencies, require combined exertions to repel them. And the political enemies of religious liberty are sure to unite. They are bound together by common interest—by the tactics of party and by the spirit of faction. Their creeds may indeed be very different: they may go to the farthest extent of implicit faith, or they may be in the opposite extreme of universal scepticism; they may be Church-of-England men or Dissenters, Roman Catholics or Deists; they may be well-principled, so far as sincerity goes, in the convictions they profess, or altogether unprincipled; but if they have a party interest in the state—if they have before them the attainment of power and emolument by being banded together as a political body—they are sure to see in religious liberty a power to cross their path and thwart their designs; for, with the spirit of religious liberty and equality are naturally connected the firmness and clearness of thought, the determination of purpose and the loftiness of spirit, that will not bow to political despotism, nor be at all the more disposed to submit to it on

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account of its wearing the garb of theological ascendency. Hence their inveterate enmity. Hence the tendency towards fraternal alliance of such churchmen as Dean Swift with such statesmen as Bolingbroke and Harley; hence such freethinkers as Gibbon voting in the House of Commons, under the banners of such ministers as Lord North, against the slightest restriction upon established intolerance. Politically or theologically, there is ever a compact and dense mass of hostility towards all real equality or freedom in religious matters. Yet surely in this country there must be many who answer to the description in the resolution—"the friends of religious liberty." Shame would it be if there were not; shame indeed in the land of Wickliffe, the foremost assertor of the right of individual interpretation of the scriptures—who raised his voice aloud and alone in that dark period against the usurped power of the Church—who, in a tone of independence that would afterwards have as little recommended him to most Protestant churches as it did then to the Catholic, claimed for the people the intellectual and religious heritage which in those scriptures God had given them—put it within their reach, naturalised it in their language, and invited them to its study, until its words sank into the heart, and there became truths germinating to every Christian and moral virtue. Shame would it be were there not "friends of religious liberty" in the land of Milton—of Milton whom this day (December 9), two hundred and thirty years ago, gave to the world—who so soon began his course of truth, of patriotism, and of goodness—who in early life drew back from the portals of a church in which he had desired to minister, because he must, as he said, "swear slave" at the commencement, and as the condition of his teaching—and who has left behind him not merely an imperishable name, but one whose lustre will brighten from age to age. Shame were it if there were not "friends of religious liberty" in the land of Priestley and Price, apostles and confessors of this great principle, who themselves demonstrated, though in different directions, the way in which it should be conscientiously and boldly exercised, invited others to do the same, penetrated to its foundation, marked its wide influence, and promulgated its universal charter to their fellow-religionists of all denominations. No doubt

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there are many such; and when occasion calls, they should be invited to coöperate, to take their stand for themselves and others, declare their principles, and defend their rights. But how are we to discriminate the "friend of religious liberty and equality" from him who is only the friend of his own liberty, and only advocates his own equality with those whom society has placed above him? When we ask who are the friends of religious liberty, the reply too often is practically made by thrusting a creed in our faces. What matters it what the creed may be, or how plain it may appear to him by whom it is presented? The very fact of the presentation of a creed is a presumption against any real friendship towards religious liberty. The whole current of ecclesiastical history tends to form such an association of ideas in the mind of the student, that when he sees a creed he thinks of persecution. Now, it unfortunately happens that the projectors of this "Plan of a General Union for the promotion of Religious Equality" do themselves begin by a creed, and by one of the most offensive modes of putting a creed that have ever been adopted. I shall read the three fundamental resolutions:

"First—That it is the paramount duty, and therefore the inalienable right, of every man to worship his Creator and Redeemer according to his religious convictions of the Divine Will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, the only authoritative rule of faith.

"Secondly—That to compel any one to contribute to the support of religious rites of which he disapproves, or of the ministers of a church from which he conscientiously dissents, is manifestly unjust, and at variance with the spirit and principles of Christianity.

"Thirdly—That state establishments, by which any particular church or sect is selected as the object of political favour and patronage, and its clergy are invested with exclusive rights and secular preëminence, involve a violation of equity towards other denominations, create serious impediments to the propagation of the gospel, render the religious union of Protestants impracticable, and are the occasion of inevitable social discord."

The second of these resolutions, on the impropriety of compelling any man to pay towards services or a ministry which he disapproves, is of unquestionable propriety and

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obvious truth. In the third, there are some exceptionable points, such as its claiming "equity towards denominations," while equity towards individual profession is the great end at which religious equality should aim. It speaks of the "propagation of the gospel," of course meaning the particular views of the gospel entertained by those who may constitute the majority of the body; and it refers to the "religious union of Protestants," thereby adopting one of the great schisms of Christendom, and involving the assertion of party objects at the very outset of its professed course of universal equality. But it is chiefly the first resolution to which I would direct your attention—"That it is the paramount duty, and therefore the inalienable right, of every man to worship his Creator and Redeemer according to his religious convictions of the Divine Will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures, the only authoritative rule of faith."

Now, this is a resolution which goes to the exclusion of perhaps the majority of the population of this country. It bases right upon duty, thus defining and prescribing all men's duty at the outset. The founders of the union erect themselves into judges of duty. They tell every man, while they profess to advocate his equality, that he is bound to act upon a principle of duty framed according to their conceptions. They not only base right upon duty, duty defined by themselves, but proceed to describe that duty and its degree of relative importance. They tell every man that it is his paramount duty to worship. Why, then, what becomes of religious equality in reference to those who do not hold it their paramount duty to worship; who think the duties of morality paramount to those of supplicating and praising the Deity; who entertain another notion of the proportion between duties; or who may not hold it their duty to worship at all, in any way which these persons would call worship? All these are arraigned of a violation of duty by the body that comes forward to advocate religious equality. And not only is the "paramount duty" laid down of all the world, but the particular mode, the object to which it is to be directed, is defined. Not only are those who do not agree with the common notions of social worship excluded by the first clause, but the next goes on to exclude those

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who do not hold a particular doctrine—the deity of Christ: for I imagine, by the introduction of the word "Redeemer," in addition to "Creator," that we are to consider this as pointing directly to the worship of him who, in their language, is called "God the Son." So that, as the first clause struck out all non-worshipers, or non-believers in the paramount duty of worship over morality, the second clause strikes out all Deists, all Unitarians, all Jews,—all who do not, in fact, go the entire length of a notion which for a long time was unable to force its way into the common faith of professing Christians. Beyond this, the resolution still goes on to define, to narrow, and to exclude: it asserts that all are bound to worship according to their "religious convictions of the Divine Will as expressed in the Holy Scriptures;" not as expressed any where else. A man may think that he derives his notion of the Divine will from other sources, and with that will he may conscientiously and devoutly conform; still he is by this religious-equality union placed in a degraded rank in comparison with religionists of their own creed and worship. He must receive the scriptures as "the only authoritative rule of faith." Why, there are many who hold tradition to be an "authoritative rule of faith." The majority of Christendom has done so for ages. The Established Church of England claims authority to decree rites and ceremonies not opposed to scripture. There are, I trust, some few in the country who hold reason to be an "authoritative rule of faith." But all are cast out under this sweeping plan of exclusion, until the profession of universal religious equality dwindles down into a mere assertion of the pretensions of a sectarian confederation. One would think that a more decent forbearance might have been shown by these votaries of religious equality and scripture authority towards those who have so studied its records and imbibed its doctrine of paramount duties as to "learn what that means,—I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, saith the Lord."

What can be more preposterous than thus directly to confront, and endeavour, as it were, to strike down with one blow, all feeling of the equality which is represented as the object of this great combination? Religious equality is fought for with a sword already stained in the heart's

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blood of charity. In this struggle for freedom, the watch-word is dictation. We may enlist in the army of champions for impartiality, on condition of swearing allegiance to sectarian exclusiveness.

No doubt this union, which I believe is already formed, may, if brought into activity, do much good. It may stop some oppressive measures; it may get rid of direct episcopal taxation upon dissenters; it may throw open all the public offices that are still appropriated to members of a particular sect; it may, in time, lead on public opinion towards the object, which is pretty plainly expressed in one of the resolutions, of the separation of church and state,—although I confess that if this separation were to involve the destruction of the public funds at present in the possession of the Church, I should deem it dearly paid for. Church property is people's property. Under a proper system of commutation, tithe is not paid by the consumer, but merely vests a tenth of the proprietorship of the land in the hands of the clergy, or rather of the legislature—the clergy's masters—as trustees. The object of that trust, of which the Church of England has failed not less signally than did the Roman-Catholic Church before it, is the spiritual culture of the entire community. To that object the funds should be held sacred, in the hope that they will some day be applied to their legitimate purpose, and be the means of establishing that national education, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, which in no other way seems capable of being realised.

In advancing whatever public good it may be found competent to achieve, let the projected union fairly appear what it is, a sectarian confederation for obtaining sectarian equality. But for freedom? Its success might leave to the most conscientious individuals only the freedom of the grain between the upper and the nether millstone. For equality? It might leave only the equality of fire and water to the mariner when his ship is blazing on the wide ocean. The triumph of sectarianism is ever the crushing of all individuality of thought and speech. It only tolerates the freedom of external conformity, the equality of spiritual subjugation.

Religious equality—that is to say, the recognised equal right of every one to think, feel, speak, and act for himself

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in theological matters—is not to be enforced by law. Its foundation must be laid more deeply than law can reach. It belongs to the state of mind and heart in reference to others—it belongs to our full and frank admission of their right to hold what we deem error, equally with our right to hold what we deem truth—it implies not merely a supercilious toleration, but a recognition that there is in them the power which we claim, and that it is in them to be as unquestioned as in ourselves. He who, in the spirit of the first resolution of this "Union," tells all men authoritatively what is their duty, decides for them the order and proportions of that duty, speaks of their paramount obligation founded on religious conviction, and declares that they ought to be equal in worshiping their Creator and Redeemer, only provided they do so according to the dictates of scripture as their exclusive rule of faith,—whatever he may cant about equality, really implies superiority in himself—religious, spiritual superiority.

And if a man claims thus to be the superior of others —their superior in knowledge, in virtue, in worship—their superior in the sight of God—will he not act as their superior?—will he comport himself as an equal in all the concerns of life, or in all his influences as a citizen upon social or institutional arrangements?—will not his children or his friends, should they diverge in theological opinion or religious practice from his infallible standard, be subject to vexations which shall make them feel he is their superior?—will not this sense of superiority extend itself wider in the social circle as it is felt and exercised by large bodies of men—by churches bound together by their common faith, rites, and discipline?—will it not act as a bribe or a threat upon "those who are without"?—will it not destroy all practical social equality in matters of religion?—will there not be temptations to set up which are utterly subversive of equality? In contemplating bodies thus acting together, will not the most sordid principles be produced and stimulated in connection with religious profession?—will not the clerical aspirant see in orthodoxy the means of forming connections and rising to preferment?—will not the lawyer see in it the promise of augmenting the number of his clients?—will not the shopkeeper trace in it one mode of increasing

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the number and value of his customers?—will not the menial find it better than character as a recommendation to a situation? Religious equality, indeed! There can be no equality in religion with agencies like these at work, discriminating and elevating one set of professed opinions to a supreme spiritual dignity, while those who hold others are branded by implication with the violation of duty. Nor can we suppose but that this disparity will find its way into laws and legal proceedings as well as into society: stimulating attempts to degrade or oppress this or that denomination, the freedom of whose opinions may have offended; suggesting the revival of obsolete enactments; and calling, as it were, from the grave the very dead, in order to catechise them on their theological opinions, and determine how that wealth may be subjected to sectarian limitation which they left free of any restriction. The Court of Chancery has been invited to discharge the functions of an inquisition, while the trumpets of dissenting orthodoxy sounded the march of a money crusade for the glory of God. Is there not the probability that still further disparities and mischiefs may arise out of the spirit manifested in this professed attempt to promote religious equality? What says one of the resolutions of this scheme? Amongst the objects contemplated are, "To coöperate, by information or advice, in promoting the return to parliament of suitable representatives, attached to the principles of religious liberty, and entitled to the confidence of the religious public." What is "the confidence of the religious public" but the confidence of a sectarian confederation? and how is that confidence won and retained but by the profession of its faith, the practice of its forms, and a unity of spirit with the exclusiveness and assumption manifested in these resolutions? Our country hitherto owes little to the senators who have enjoyed most of the confidence of the religious public. There was a party once of parliamentary saints, and what did they for staying the effusion of blood, for the lightening of public burdens, the correction of abuses, or the removal of religious disabilities?

The power of law to establish religious equality may be tested by an appeal to the United States of America. There sectarian equality coexists with the worst forms of sectarian tyranny. The triumph of sects is there, as ever,

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the crushing of all individuality of thought and expression. There all sects are equal: they are free from many of the evils to which the old countries of Europe, and this especially, are exposed; but they have not withal individual liberty. They have no more of religious equality—that is, of the equality of individuals in the free expression of their opinions, whatever those opinions may be—than exists here. I shall read some illustrations of the state of things as to opinion there, under the sectarian domination that generally exists, the first of which will be taken from Miss Martineau's *Society in America*, the third volume, the book on Religion:

"In a country which professes to secure to every man the pursuit of happiness in his own way, what is the state of his liberty in the most private and individual of all concerns? How carefully are all men and women left free from interference in following up their own aspirations after the Infinite, in realising their own ideas of perfection, in bringing into harmonious action the functions of their spirits, as infinitely diversified as the expressions of their features?

"The absence of such diversity is the first striking fact which presents itself on the institution of such an inquiry. If there were no constraint—no social reward or penalty—such an approach to uniformity of profession could not exist as is seen in the United States. In a society where speculation and profession were left perfectly free, as included among the inalienable rights of man, there would be many speculative—though probably extremely few practical—Atheists; there would be an adoption by many of the principles of natural religion, otherwise than in and through Christianity; and Christianity would be adopted in modes as various as the minds by which it would be recognised. Instead of this, we find laws framed against speculative Atheists; opprobrium directed upon such as embrace natural religion otherwise than through Christianity; and a yet more bitter oppression exercised by those who view Christianity in one way over those who regard it in another. A religious young Christian legislator was pitied, blamed, and traduced in Boston, last year, by clergymen, lawyers, and professors of a college, for endeavouring to obtain a repeal of the law under which the testimony of speculative Atheists is rejected in courts of

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justice. Quakers—calling themselves Friends—excommunicate each other; Presbyterian clergymen preach hatred to Catholics; a convent is burned, and the nuns are banished from the neighbourhood; and Episcopalian clergymen claim credit for admitting Unitarians to sit in committees for public objects! As might be expected under such an infringement of the principle of securing to every man the pursuit of happiness in his own way, there is no such endless diversity in the action of minds and utterance of tongues as nature and fidelity to truth peremptorily demand. Truth is deprived of the irrefragable testimony which would be afforded by whatever agreement might arise amidst this diversity; religion is insulted and scandalised by nominal adherence and hypocritical advocacy. There are many ways of professing Christianity in the United States; but there are few, very few men—whether speculative or thoughtless, whether studious or ignorant, whether reverent or indifferent, whether sober or profligate, whether disinterested or worldly—who do not carefully profess Christianity in some form or another. This, as men are made, is unnatural. Society presents no faithful mirror of the religious perspective of the human mind.

"It may be asked whether this is not true of the Old World also. It is: but the society of the Old World has not yet grasped in practice any one fundamental democratic principle; and the few who govern the many have not yet perceived that religion is 'the root of all democracy'—they are so far from it, that they are still upholding an established form of religion, in which a particular mode of belief is enforced upon minds by the imposition of virtual rewards and punishments. The Americans have long taken higher ground—repudiating establishments, and professing to leave religion free. They must be judged by their own principles, and not by the example of societies whose errors they have practically denounced by their adoption of the voluntary principle.

"The almost universal profession in America of the adoption of Christianity,—this profession by many whose habits of thought, and others whose habits of living, forbid the supposition that it is the religion of their individual intellects and affections,—compels the inquiry what sort of Christianity it is that is professed, and how it is come by.

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There is no evading the conviction that it is to a vast extent a monstrous superstition that is thus embraced by the tyrant, the profligate, the worldling, the bigot, the coward, and the slave—a superstition which offers little molestation to their vices, little rectification to their errors—a superstition which is but the spurious offspring of that divine Christianity which 'is the root of all democracy, the highest fact in the rights of man.' That so many of the meek, pure, disinterested, free, and brave make the same profession, proves only that they penetrate to religion through superstition, or that they cast away unconsciously the superstition with which their spirits have no affinity, and accept such truth as all superstition must include in order to live.

"The only test by which religion and superstition can be ultimately tried is that with which they coexist. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'"—*Society in America*, vol. iii. pp. 226, 227.

Shortly afterwards, with continued reference to the same subject, the following observations occur:

"There is in this respect a dreadful infringement on human rights throughout the North, though a better spirit is being cherished and extended by a few who see how contrary to all Christian and all democratic principles it is that a man should be the worse for his opinions in society. I have seen enough to know how little chance Christianity has in consequence of this infringement. I know that very large numbers of people are secretly disinclined to cherish what is imposed upon them with perpetual and unvarying modes of observance, from their childhood up; and how the disgust grows from the opprobrium with which unbelief is visited. I know that there are minds in New England, as every where else, which must, from their very structure, pass through a state of scepticism on their way to stability; and that such are surrounded with snares, such as no man should lay in his brother's path; with temptations to hypocrisy, to recklessness, to despair; and to an abdication of their human prerogative of reason as well as conscience. I know how women, in whom the very foundations of belief have been ploughed up by the share of authority, go wearily to church, Sunday after Sunday, to hear what they do not

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believe; lie down at night full of self-reproach for a want of piety which they do not know how to attain; and rise up in the morning hopelessly, seeing nothing in the day before them but the misery of carrying their secret concealed from parents, husband, sisters, friends. I know how young men are driven into vice, by having only the alternative of conformity or opprobrium; feeling it impossible to believe what is offered them—feeling it to be no crime to disbelieve; but, seeing unbelief treated as crime, and themselves under suspicion of it, losing faith in others and in themselves, and falling in reality at last. All this, and very much more, I know to be happening. I was told of one and another, with an air of mystery like that with which one is informed of any person being insane, or intemperate, or insolvent, that so and so was thought to be an unbeliever. I was always tempted to reply, 'And so are you in a thousand things, to which this neighbour of yours adds one.' An elderly, generally intelligent, benevolent gentleman told me that he wanted to see regulations made by which Deists should be excluded from office, and moral men only admitted. Happily the community is not nearly so far gone in tyranny and folly as to entertain such a project as this; but it must be a very superstitious society where such an idea could be deliberately expressed by a sane man."—*Ib.* pp. 238, 239.

Nor is it merely over the expression of opinions which may be charged with going to the extreme of heresy in religion, that this sectarian domination is exercised. We find it extending to some of the most elementary moral principles, where popular interests or prejudices are concerned; and there are some very strong statements in this work, and in another publication by the same writer, on the degree to which persecution is carried on the question of slavery in the States. Taking it as a religious question, this account is given of it in the work before us:

"The first great mischief which arises from the disinclination of the clergy to bring what may be disturbing questions before their people, is that they themselves inevitably undergo a perversion of views about the nature of their pastoral office. To take the most striking instance now presented in the United States. The clergy have not yet begun to stir upon the anti-slavery question. A very

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few Presbyterian clergymen have nobly risked every thing for it; some being members of abolition societies, and some professors in the Oberlin Institute and its branches, where all prejudice of colour is discountenanced. But the bulk of the Presbyterian clergy are as fierce as the slaveholders against the abolitionists. I believe they would not object to have Mr. Breckinridge considered a sample of their body. The Episcopalian clergy are generally silent on the subject of human rights, or give their influence against the abolitionists. Not to go over the whole list of denominations, it is sufficient to mention that the ministers generally are understood to be opposed to abolition, from the circumstances of their silence in the pulpit, of their conversation in society, and the conduct of those who are most under their influence. I pass on to the Unitarians, the religious body with which I am best acquainted, from my being a Unitarian myself. The Unitarians believe that they are not liable to many superstitions which cramp the minds and actions of other religionists. They profess a religion of greater freedom; and declare that Christianity, as they see it, has an affinity with all that is free, genial, intrepid, and true in the human mind; and that it is meant to be carried out into every social arrangement, every speculation of thought, every act of the life. Clergymen who preach this live in a crisis when a tremendous conflict of principles is taking place. On one side is the oppressor, struggling to keep his power for the sake of his gold; and with him the mercenary, the faithlessly timid, the ambitious, and the weak. On the other side are the friends of the slave, and with them those who, without possibility of recompense, are sacrificing their reputations, their fortunes, their quiet, and risking their lives, for the principle of freedom. What are the Unitarian clergy doing amidst this war, which admits of neither peace nor truce, but which must end in the subjugation of the principle of freedom or of oppression?"

After mentioning with due honour the names of Mr. May, Dr. Follen, and Dr. Channing, the author thus proceeds:

"I know of two more of the Unitarian clergy who have made an open and dangerous avowal of the right; and of one or two who have in private resisted wrong in the cause: but this is all. As a body, they must, though

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disapproving slavery, be ranked as the enemies of the abolitionists. Some have pleaded to me, that it is a distasteful subject. Some think it sufficient that they can see faults in individual abolitionists; some say that their pulpits are the property of their people, who are not therefore to have their minds disturbed by what they hear thence; some say that the question is no business of theirs; some urge that they should be turned out of their pulpits before the next Sunday, if they touched upon Human Rights; some think the subject not spiritual enough. The greater number excuse themselves on the ground of a doctrine, which I cannot but think has grown out of the circumstances, that the duty of the clergy is to decide on how much truth the people can bear, and to administer it accordingly. So, while society is going through the greatest of moral revolutions, casting out its most vicious anomaly, and bringing its Christianity into its politics and its social conduct, the clergy, even the Unitarian clergy, are some pitying and some ridiculing the apostles of the revolution; preaching spiritualism, learning, speculation; advocating third and fourth-rate objects of human exertion and amelioration, and leaving it to the laity to carry out the first and pressing moral reform of the age. They are blind to their noble mission of enlightening and guiding the moral sentiment of society in its greatest crisis. They not only decline aiding the cause in week-days by deed, or pen, or spoken words, but they agree in private to avoid the subject of Human Rights in the pulpit till the crisis be past. No one asks them to harrow the feelings of their hearers by sermons on slavery; but they avoid offering those Christian principles of faith and liberty with which slavery cannot coexist."—*Ib.* pp. 278-282.

It may be said, however, that the writer of this work is a zealous abolitionist; that perhaps earnestness in the cause, a good cause though it be, may give a distorted view of the extent to which freedom in the expression of opinion is suppressed or assailed in the United States. I will take, therefore, a witness who is not exceptionable on this ground; I appeal to a native American, one of the very preachers that she describes; a Unitarian preacher, not an abolitionist, but yet one who has rendered a most important service to the cause of truth, of morals, and of

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freedom by his interesting and eloquent expositions of the modes in which the commercial spirit and other influences affect the morality of his country—I mean the Rev. Orville Dewey, in his volume of twelve discourses, recently published, entitled, *Moral Views of Commerce, Society, and Politics.*

Now on this abolition question, on the tyranny exercised over individuals who advocate it, he speaks thus strongly; and I must remind you, in order to understand some expressions, that murders by assembled multitudes, these not being exactly what are called mobs in this country, but consisting chiefly of persons belonging to the commercial or landed gentry of America, have actually been committed in consequence of the excitement produced by meetings on this subject.

"It is true, indeed, and lamentable as true, that this peaceful order is sometimes broken. It is true and lamentable that some of our citizens have strangely forgotten the very principle on which our institutions are based,—freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of publication, freedom of trial by jury, as the only condition on which life, liberty, or property in this country shall be ever touched. My blood runs cold in my veins, and I tremble as I look upon my children, to think that my house or yours may yet be surrounded by an armed mob, that you or I may be shot down, without remorse, on our own threshold, simply for asserting our honest opinion. But I thank God that this is yet a country, and I trust in God always will be a country, in which I can express my indignation alike against the despotism of a government and the despotism of a populace. When it ceases to be such, be it no longer my country! Give me any tyranny, rather than that most monstrous of all the tyrannies ever heard of—the bloody violence of a lawless people, with liberty on their lips and murder in their hearts. Let this body of mine sink under the Turkish bow-string, or the Russian knout, rather than be trodden out of life under the heels of a brutal populace. I am not an abolitionist in the technical sense of that word, and I say it now only that I may give my words the greater force—for if I thought every abolitionist in the country worthy of death, I should still say that the hand which inflicted it, without

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the forms of law, was the hand of a murderer; and woe and shame to the country, if such deeds can go unpunished!"

Nor is it merely on this point that a terrible despotism over opinion is exercised in America, as it might be in this country, were a subject similarly involving the interests of large classes to be brought into public discussion; but, according to the writer, it extends through the whole system of society; being most inexorable and intolerable in matters of religion. Every where there is the domination of sect and creed over the thought and feeling of individuals. He thus portrays its influence:

"But we, in this country, have our own dangers. And the greatest of all dangers here, as I conceive, is that of general pusillanimity, of moral cowardice, of losing a proper and manly independence of character. I think that I see something of this in our very manners, in the hesitation, the indirectness, the cautious and circuitous modes of speech, the eye asking assent before the tongue can finish its sentence. I think that in other countries you oftener meet with men who stand manfully and boldly up, and deliver their opinion without asking or caring what you or others think about it. It may sometimes be rough and harsh; but, at any rate, it is independent. Observe, too, in how many relations, political, religious, and social, a man is liable to find bondage instead of freedom. If he wants office he must attach himself to a party, and then his eyes must be sealed in blindness, and his lips in silence, towards all the faults of his party. He *may* have his eyes open, and he may see much to condemn, but he must *say* nothing. If he edits a newspaper, his choice is often between bondage and beggary; that may actually be the choice, though he does not know it; he may be so complete a slave, that he does not feel the chain; his passions may be so enlisted in the cause of his party, as to blind his discrimination, and destroy all comprehension and capability of independence. So it may be with the religious partisan. He knows, perhaps, that there are errors in his adopted creed, faults in his sect, fanaticism and extravagance in some of its measures. See if you can get him to speak of them; see if you can get him to breathe a whisper of doubt. No, he is always believing. He has a convenient phrase that covers up all difficulties in his creed; he be-

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lieves it 'for *substance* of doctrine;' or, if he is a layman, perhaps he does not believe it at all. What, then, is his conclusion? Why, he has friends who do believe it; and he does not wish to offend them. And so he goes on, listening to what he does not believe; outwardly acquiescing, inwardly remonstrating; the slave of fear or fashion, never daring, not once in his life daring, to speak out and openly the thought that is in him. Nay, he sees men suffering under the weight of public reprobation, for the open espousal of the very opinions *he* holds, and he has never the generosity or manliness to say, '*I* think so too.' Nay, more; by the course he pursues, he is made to cast his stone, or he holds it in his hand at least, and lets another arm apply the force necessary to cast it, at the very men who are suffering a sort of martyrdom *for his own faith!*

"I am not now advocating any particular opinions; I am only advocating a manly freedom in the expression of those opinions which a man does entertain. And if those opinions are unpopular, I hold that in this country there is so much the more need of an open and independent expression of them. Look at the case most seriously, I beseech you. What is ever to correct the faults of society, if nobody lifts his voice against them; if every body goes on openly doing what every body privately complains of; if all shrink behind the faint-hearted apology, that it would be over-bold in them to attempt any reform? What is to rebuke political time-serving, religious fanaticism, or social folly, if no one has the independence to protest against them? Look at it in a larger view. What barrier is there against the universal despotism of public opinion in this country but individual freedom? Who is to stand up against it here, but the possessor of that lofty independence? There is no king, no sultan, no noble, no privileged class, nobody else to stand against it. If you yield this point, if you are for ever making compromises, if all men do this, if the entire policy of private life here is to escape opposition and reproach, every thing will be swept beneath the popular wave. There will be no individuality, no hardihood, no high and stern resolve, no self-subsistence, no fearless dignity, no glorious manhood of mind, left among us. The holy heritage of our fathers' virtues

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will be trodden under foot by their unworthy children. *They* feared not to stand up against kings and nobles, and parliament and people. Better did they account it that their lonely bark should sweep the wide sea in freedom—happier were they when their sail swelled to the storm of winter—than to be slaves in palaces of ease. Sweeter to their ear was the music of the gale that shrieked in their broken cordage than the voice at home that said, 'Submit, and you shall have rest.' And when they reached this wild shore, and built their altar, and knelt upon the frozen snow and the flinty rock to worship, they built that altar to freedom, to individual freedom, to freedom of conscience and opinion: and their noble prayer was, that their children might be thus free. Let their sons remember the prayer of their extremity, and the great bequest which their magnanimity has left us. Let them beware how they become entangled again in the yoke of bondage. Let the ministers at God's altar, let the guardians of the press, let all sober and thinking men, speak *the thought that is in them.* It is better to speak honest *error* than to suppress conscious truth. Smothered error is more dangerous than that which flames and burns out. But do I speak of danger? I know of but one thing safe in the universe, and that is truth; and I know of but one way to truth for an individual mind, and that is, unfettered thought; and I know but one path for the multitude to truth, and that is, thought freely expressed. Make of truth itself an altar of slavery, and guard it about with a mysterious shrine; bind thought as a victim upon it, and let the passions of the prejudiced multitude minister fuel; and you sacrifice upon that accursed altar the hopes of the world."

I have read extracts more at length than is my custom, because I purpose thereby to furnish an authentic and vivid picture of a state of society actually existing, in which all religious sects and denominations possess that for which religious sects and bodies are striving here; where they have the rights and equality which here they demand, but where, in consequence of the creeds which these bodies profess, of the discipline which they exercise, of the bigoted or proselyting spirit which they cherish,—in short, of the dominant and domineering principle of their system,—there is no individual liberty, no freedom for this

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or that mind to pursue its own course, to build up its own faith, to declare its own conviction, and to proceed as a brother and an equal amongst brethren and equals through the course of our mortal career to man's final destiny. Men must recognise and prize this freedom before it can be won. It is to be won rather in their own opinions than through the agency of law. It is an exemption from a despotism far more severe and oppressive than any which law can exercise: for, better than this state of things in America was the degree of liberty that the Church of England formerly allowed, before hypocrisy and fanaticism were blended with its conventionality—when by a dash of the pen at the bottom of the Thirty-nine Articles a man could get liberty to preach against them all the rest of his life; better than this was the degree of freedom connived at by the Roman-Catholic Church, when almost any tenet of its faith might be attacked, provided there was just appended at the foot of the disquisition a general acknowledgment of submission to the authority of the Holy Pontiff and the Catholic Church; or when the heretical doctrine of the *Antipodes* and all the physical speculations and discoveries of the *Principia* could be published by Jesuits, with merely a reservation in the title-page to the effect that, Newton's philosophy resting on an heretical assumption, it was therefore only offered as a curious theory. There is in such instances a single act of falsehood, purchasing thereby something of truth for the remainder of life, which surely is better than the converse mode of proceeding, where a man is bound in continuous falsehood. The apology might be adopted that was made by one of old, who said, "When my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." And the Lord, who, in the theology of that age, is called a jealous God, might much rather pardon a single act of idolatry, which won for the individual the freedom of worship on all other occasions, than that suppression of truth which makes the whole being a living lie, an unceasing idolatry of opinion.

Religious, like political equality, allows every one his independent voice or suffrage. It knows nothing of a

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spiritual oligarchy. It renders homage to human nature, which creeds ever tend to crush; and reckons for something the brain and heart of man. Those who have practically imbibed the spirit of religious equality regard thinking more than thought, thought more than expression, and honest unbelief more than unreasoning conformity. Instead of excluding, excommunicating, or socially injuring, they will not even mentally condemn others for differing from themselves. As little any where else as in the United States can law do for this disposition; or the sectarian equality, which is all that law can enforce. But when it is generated, alike powerless are oppressive laws and institutions in their hostility. They crumble under its quiet touch, like the old towers of feudal ages, when the green verdure of nature clings around them, adorning their decay, and pulling them down to the dust.

The principle of religious equality, the grand protection of civil and social rights, is also the promoter of individual happiness. The fancied spiritual superior cannot be really happy in the sense of his superiority. It is based on falsehood; it degrades his Deity, and embitters his heart; it lives in a gloomy world, associates with a condemned race, aspires to an exclusive heaven, dreads a vindictive and eternal hell. This, "our little life, is rounded with a sleep;" but in the eternal life which he contemplates, immortality only runs parallel with sin and suffering.

There is no equality like that of religion. Not that of law, when most impartially framed and administered; for disparities of wealth, condition, and talent will exercise some influence, in spite of the wisest precautions. Not that of birth, though all are born alike helpless; inasmuch as for the helplessness of one infant there is gorgeous tending, the most careful selection of food and clothing and locality, and all appliances to nurture the principle of life into healthy, vigorous, and continuous action; while others are exposed in different degrees to the inclemency of the seasons, often left destitute of needful care and superintendence, and destined to exhibit, in many a privation and endurance, the appropriateness of the incident that the great Teacher of the poor was born in a stable and cradled in a manger. Not that of death: all must resign this their mortal being; but with some the advent of dissolution is

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procrastinated by the power of art and science, whilst in others it is prematurely advanced by the toils of their daily occupation, or by their inevitable exposure to disease and accident; when death arrives, it consigns one to his humble grave unnoted and unmourned, whilst the other rests in his marble monument; and after death there are names borne along upon the stream of renown from generation to generation, whilst others perish, never to be heard of more.

But the equality of religion approaches far nearer to the entire and absolute. All finite differences, even those of intelligence and ignorance, vanish in the contemplation of the Infinite. "It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?" We are all but as children lisping some of the letters of an alphabet which in its countless combinations contains, and will eventually unfold, the annals of Almighty Providence, the science of unbounded wisdom, the poetry and the promise of universal love.

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MORAL VIEW OF THE CORN-LAW QUESTION.

To many persons, no doubt, the subject of the present lecture—the now much-agitated question of the repeal of the Corn Laws—may seem incongruously blended with the services of religion, and very alien from that spirituality which it should be the first object of religious instruction to promote; but I would suggest to them that spirituality is less in the character of the topic than in the tone of the mind. A great poet has told the world that to him the meanest flower that blows will often suggest "thoughts that do lie too deep for tears." Nor is there a temporary interest of whatever description, a social struggle however remote it may seem, that not only may naturally blend with, but if rightly considered that does not imperatively require, an appeal to those great principles, and the calling up of that state of mind, which belong to the purest forms of real religion.

What is the spirituality even of the Bible itself? wherein does it consist? what are the contents of that volume but the science and the history, the law and jurisprudence, the poetry and the politics, of the Hebrew people? These, it is said, are consecrated by their subordination to higher principles and grander views. Be it so; and why should not our history and science, our law and jurisprudence, our poetry and politics, be thus subordinated also? for assuredly, in their being so, we the most nearly approach to the letter and spirit of the volume that is held in such veneration. In religious and moral instruction, different topics must have their place in different countries and ages, and under the pressure of a great diversity of circumstances. Civil and political rights are now diffused abroad over large masses of the community, which, when the scriptures were written, had no existence. The circle of duty is extended, but its unity ought not to be thereby impaired. It is a great evil in this country that moral and religious considerations are allowed to blend so little as they do with political and commercial discussions. What is the result,

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but a low and sordid, a mean and selfish, a narrow-minded and partisan-like, view of every topic whatever? Not thus did the really great men of our nation apply themselves to the questions of the day: they ever showed the universal rising out of the limited, the enduring associated with the transitory; and when such minds as those of Bacon, of Milton, and, nearer our own times, of Burke, were employed, as often they were employed, on matters for public debate and immediate settlement, they failed not to invoke the eternal principles of justice, or to realise the mighty objects for which man exists on the earth, whether in his individual capacity or in his social relations. With them, as in the Bible, the spiritual was not only above, but around and in the temporal, pervading, extending, purifying, and elevating it into its own spirituality. Not that I think this apology to its fullest extent is needed as to the question before us; for assuredly that is one on which an interest much wider and deeper must be felt than on the topics that often furnish occasion for pulpit discussions, or than many that have an undisputed place in moral teaching. It is one which, in its diversified influence, is brought home, or should be, to all classes, to all ages. It affects the procedure and condition of almost every being in this great empire: rulers in the facility of government, and subjects in the cheerfulness of obedience; producers in the amount of their productions, and distributors in the number of their exchanges; the manufacturer in the prosperity of his establishments, and the farmer in the cultivation of his ground; the capitalist in his profits, and the workman in his wages; the landlord in his rent, and the clergy in their tithe; daily bread in its cheapness, and education, science, literature, and art in the surplus means for their encouragement; the poor child in the ability of its toiling parents to satisfy its hunger, and the crowned Queen in the benignity of her reign and the greatness of her empire.

To take the subject of this lecture in the simplest and most obvious point of view, the efforts which are now making for the repeal of the Corn Laws have, as their probable immediate result, the bettering of the physical condition of the great masses of the population. That it is a duty to improve the physical condition of the millions I scarcely need argue. The duty is undisputed. It is the

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fact that is demurred to. At the evidence of that fact I may be allowed to glance. It must assuredly better the condition of those who toil for wages, that those wages command more of the first necessary of life. It is undenied, whatever might be the effect of the change of the system here in raising the price of corn on the Continent,—it is undenied that it must to some extent lower the price here of man's daily food—of his bread. But this is not all. It is equally undeniable, and I suppose also undenied, that it would lower not only the price of his bread, but of many other articles of consumption, and first, the most necessary articles of daily consumption that come under the description of agricultural produce. But further: if this be a result, then assuredly the price of the most common and needful manufacturing products must be lowered also; and if they be lowered, it must also happen that almost every thing that enters into the unavoidable expenditure of a working man's family must be reduced in price. Here, then, improvement is carried through nearly the entire round of the physical necessaries and conveniences of his existence. But then there are two objections made to this, which may be comprised in the terms "reduction of wages" and "increased competition." The two are in fact only one, because in no way can there be reduction of wages but by increased competition for employment. No doubt, by throwing inferior lands out of cultivation, there may be a number of agricultural labourers brought into competition with manufacturing labourers, so far, and so far only, as unskilled labour is concerned; but this transfer must be very gradual. Were a free interchange of commodities with all countries to become the law of the land, so vast a market would open to industry and ingenuity, to the capital and skill of this country, that the transfer might be made entirely, in no very long time, of the whole amount of the labour now employed in agriculture from that sphere to the manufacturing, and yet there would be verge and scope enough for more. But nothing of this sort could take place. The home corn-grower must always have such an immense advantage over the foreigner, as to secure the cultivation of the best lands in the country, of all that ought to be in cultivation. This competition would therefore soon come to a stand, and a long and continuous

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career of improvement would open before all who, in the exercise of their skill and labour, contemplated the advance of their own condition, the bettering the state of themselves and their families.

I therefore rest as a fact on this first position—that a change of system would improve the physical condition of the labouring portion of the community. If the fact be admitted, as I said before, the duty will not be denied: but is the duty understood? It is one thing to admit it—it is another to realise to the imagination what such a result is as that of improving the physical condition of the great masses of the community. The objects are, not tens and twenties, not scores and hundreds, not the thousands even that are benefited by particular charitable institutions, for which great interest is excited and large collections made, and about which there is so much gratulation from one to another when they are successful in their objects,—but something of incalculably greater magnitude. Taking only the operative manufacturers in Great Britain, we are carried onwards from tens of thousands to millions, if we reckon them and their families; if to these we add the vast number of persons who are engaged in trade, and their families, who would be distinctly benefited in the same manner—and if to these we add those unconnected either with agriculture or manufactures, annuitants, and persons of small property derived from various sources—if we exclude those only about whom question may be made, namely, the holders of land, and the persons employed under them—we arrive at some such number as twelve millions of living beings, whose physical condition, to a smaller or larger extent, would be the better for the change. Now let those whose feelings are moved by cases of particular distress endeavour to grasp something of the magnitude of this question. Charity is lovely in all its forms and manifestations; by your penny to the wandering beggar, and your subscriptions to Christmas distributions of food, coals, or clothing to the poor, you do a little, and but a little; perhaps the best part of it, the relief of your own kind-heartedness—and God bless that kind-heartedness! but what are all your institutions and charities, refuges for the destitute, or hospitals for the diseased, when they are brought into competition with the immense result of an

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improvement in the physical condition of twelve millions of living beings? It seems like the work of a God, a miracle of goodness—beneficence worthy of the Creator of a world.

Remember how much it includes. The improvement of the physical condition of the large masses of the community does not terminate in itself. It is not a barren blessing. It acts, and acts promptly and extensively, on the mental, on the moral, on the religious condition of those multitudes, as well as on their physical state. We profess to desire the diffusion of knowledge, the general intellectual improvement of the labouring classes. Why, what a cruel absurdity it seems to talk to a man of intellectual improvement, of cultivating and recreating his mind, when he is ill-housed, ill-clothed, his meals deficient in quantity, and not of a nutritive or stimulating quality—when he has no opportunity for collecting his wandering thoughts, his narrow abode forming no refuge from noise or distraction—his temper incessantly jarred—books not within his reach, or only with difficulty scarcely to be surmounted—and soul and body worn down by carking cares! Is this man in a condition to exert himself for the cultivation of his faculties, and apply to the study of history, of science, or of poetry? The first thing is to put him in such a condition that his mind can have free and fair play; to have him better housed, better clothed, better fed; and then let him begin his mental race, like a giant rejoicing in the freshness of his strength, feeling his new advantages, and gradually rising from the improvement of his physical condition to improvement in his mental condition also.

Turn from the workman himself to his offspring. How is it now that they are so debarred from the means of instruction; how is it that the labouring youth of England in such multitudes grow up, in spite of all the kindness, in spite of all the anxiety that may be felt on their behalf,—that they grow up in a condition in which they have not the means, multitudes of them, of the simplest and commonest instruction, to say nothing of those higher forms of education which might be and ought to be rendered universal, because there are in all the common qualities of the human constitution which culture should develop? Why is it that the young are so frequently forced to premature labour? Why is it that, even with laws to a cer-

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tain extent restricting the years at which they should be employed, there is a constant tendency to evade those laws, and that on the part of parents as well as on the part of masters? Why is it that so many labouring parents in this country become as it were slave-dealers in their own flesh and blood, and sell the bones and muscles of their offspring to that premature toil which withers and cripples human beings, soul and body together? Is this a spontaneous line of conduct? I will not believe it. There may be a few depraved exceptions, but in general it is the scorpion lash of gaunt famine that drives them on to such a course; it is the hard urging of necessity; it is the same impulse in kind, though not so strong in degree, as that which makes the longing of the cannibal arise in crews of shipwrecked sailors; the same in kind, though happily inferior in degree, as that which made the delicate woman, during the protracted beleaguerment of Jerusalem by the Romans, seethe her own child in the pot for food. It is the unnatural state of society which goads them on to that which violates not only the dictates of human nature, of true and loving human nature, but even the animal instinct of paternity. Would it not be a blessing, an incalculable blessing to humanity, that an improvement in the physical condition of the labouring classes should give them the opportunity of looking forward to the early education, rather than to the early working and wages, of their infant offspring? The best ten-hours' bill, the best five-hours' bill, the best no-hours' bill at all, and perhaps the most efficient education bill, would be that which, by improving the physical condition of the great mass of the labouring people, should give free scope to their kindness, to their paternal affection, to their solicitude for their offspring, and enable them to avail themselves of the coöperation of others, or even to do without that coöperation, and place their children on a better intellectual standing than themselves. A petition against the Corn Laws is, of itself, a munificent subscription to schools for all.

An improvement of the physical condition of the poorer classes implies moral improvement also. Morality cannot be enforced—no, not by the threatening of divines, nor by the terrors of the prison or of the gibbet. It is by circumstances that morality is taught and cherished. The labour-

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ing man is made selfish even in his intellectual enjoyments by his present privations. He has not the possibility of participation in them at home, such as his home now is too commonly—he has not even there, in many cases, the opportunity of pursuing them in quiet. He cannot fix his attention, whilst all the varied annoyances of his cabined and confined dwelling are around him; and what wonder, then, that he goes out to pursue them; that he gives an uudue proportion of his time to that mental cultivation for which there is external and social accommodation provided, and that it alienates him from the intercommunion and the kindnesses of family and home? And what wonder is it, also, that the fluted pillars, and brilliant lights, and genial warmth, and seductive attractions, of the gin-temple should act upon his senses, and be welcomed as some counteraction to the heart-sinking state in which he is doomed generally to exist, and the manifold privations of his habitual endurance? We cannot take up the tone of strong condemnation, however deep may be our regret, and however earnest our desire that there should be the strength that resists the temptation. The temper gives way: it becomes hard and cold, and even fierce, under the multiplied evils of physical privation. The tale of others' distress will often act little, if at all, on the mind, because the sense of personal distress rises up to conflict with it and rebut it. Suspicion is generated of the motives of all, when some have been found to press so hardly on the individual and on the class; and thus every check is given to the unfolding of the kindliest and most benevolent propensities—every thing is done to harden the repulsive and selfish propensities. Could any great change be produced—and I think the measure now so loudly called for promises such a change to a very considerable extent—the mind would expand itself in the new warmth generated around it; there would be the disposition to recognise goodness in others, by the nascent feeling in the individual; and a moral agency would be set at work far more efficacious than laws or establishments of religion are able to employ. Honour to the virtue in poverty that often surmounts all these difficulties; but shame to those who help not to lessen the temptations!

And what is religion, but a result of this physical improvement, of this mental improvement, of this better

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social condition? I do not on the present occasion discuss any particular form of religion. I oppose no one's dogmas. I wish every one the quiet possession of his own form of faith and worship, and I rejoice in a gospel preached to the poor. But I apprehend no religionist of any class can deny that some phases, and those amongst the most beautiful, of religion, must be produced as the result of a previous training, and are not to be realised by arbitrary means. When lightened and remunerated toil allows the mind to exercise and recreate itself, and the spiritual nature to germinate; when it makes man a thoughtful being, looking before and after—impels the family affections to expand, observant care of his offspring, and fondness, reacting to each other's increase; when the susceptibilities of individual sympathy can freely open, unchilled by the sense of personal suffering; when interests are expanded into the world around, and in the harmonies of nature and society the power is gradually and gratefully traced of pervading love;—that is religion such as, to any extent, neither catechising nor sermonising ever has generated, nor ever will, without the improvement of the physical condition. In influences such as these from the removal of a tax on man's daily bread, we cannot but feel that the staff of life is like the rod of Aaron, which was bare and barren as the emblem of tribe or class dignity, but when placed in the mercy-seat it budded, and blossomed, and brought forth fruit.

Hitherto I have proceeded on economical calculation, indicating a result of probabilities sufficiently strong to be a reasonable motive of action. I proceed now to other considerations which do not rest on that basis, but are independent of it and of each other, but yet which apply strongly to the moral bearings of this great question. I deem the Corn Laws to be immoral legislation, because they are legislation for the exclusive benefit of a class—they select a class to endow it with privileges, to place it in a more elevated position than the rest of the community, and in fact to levy a tax on the rest of the community for the benefit of that class; thus widening the distinctions that it should be the aim of an enlightened and Christian legislation as much as possible to obliterate—elevating the loftiest of society, and depressing the lowest—enriching the richest, and impoverishing the poorest. A proceeding like

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this cannot be for the well-being of a community: in fact, the very word 'community' becomes inapplicable to the state that is thus governed; it tends to the creation of a distinct caste, establishing practically the theory that the many exist for the few, and not the few and the many in social arrangements alike for all. There may be supremacy and subordination, there may be freedom and slavery, combined together under such a system; but there is not properly political society—not that which deserves the name of a community.

I am not for limiting the powers of government, of which democracy, because generally antagonistic, has generally been unwisely jealous. Tax society for the necessary agency of government; tax it for the administration of justice; tax it for fleets and armies, and whatever means are required for its protection; tax it for realising an amplitude of instruction and of enjoyment; but do not tax it for the artificial elevation of some and depression of others, to the destruction of that equality which is indicated by nature and chartered by Christianity.

It is sometimes urged that the progress of civilisation requires a leisure class in society; that it is for the good of all classes that there should be a leisure class, to refine manners, to cultivate science and art, to diffuse knowledge, purify philosophy, and elevate morality; and thus to do for other classes what they could not by possibility do for themselves. But for the production of such a class should we not rather rely on nature than on artificial arrangement? The attempt to foster and sustain a leisure class has been singularly unfortunate, according to all historical records. The priesthood of Egypt was such a class, and what were its achievements? It made the entire land the property of the monarch, and reduced the whole nation to serfdom; it locked up knowledge in hieroglyphics, keeping all science as a peculiar property, and using it chiefly to play tricks before the eyes of the people so as to deceive their senses, and bind them in a state of mental subservience; by its mysticism it led the people into the grossest forms of idolatry, and made them a more degraded population than perhaps the world has ever seen; and at last this leisure class, and the productive classes too, over whom it ruled, passed away, leaving, as a fit emblem of the

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magnificence of its claims and the littleness of its doings, the discovery to be made, thousands of years afterwards, by great diligence and exertion, that the priesthood of Egypt had enshrined the bones of a cow in the centre of a pyramid. The Jewish priesthood was also a leisure class. It kept the kingdom in a continual turmoil, and the greatest good that it did was that in which its own purposes were most signally defeated, when it bequeathed to the world the blessings that resulted from its suicidal conduct in having crucified Christ and destroyed Jerusalem. The Catholic Church tried the experiment on the system of selection. Its clergy were a leisure class, formed on a better principle, perhaps, than any other; and yet the result was a tyranny so unendurable, that the general mind of Europe rose up in rebellion against it, and that series of conflicts followed, of which the first was the Reformation of Saxony, and not the last the French Revolution.

With all history warning of failure, we can think but little of the scheme of a leisure class, which adopts means for its realisation so exceedingly unfitted as that of forming a landed aristocracy, in order to be the conservators of purity of morals and manners, the cherishers of genius, the source of intellectual glory and of literary excellence, to a community. It is the working literature of our country that may throw down the gauntlet to the poetry and philosophy either of the ancient or of the modern world, and little care for the abstraction of the entire catalogue of royal and noble authors.

The formation of cities is one of the most remarkable steps in the history of humanity. The glorious communities of antiquity were civic states. Cities have ever been the central points of civilisation. There sprang up the arts that refine and the philosophy that ennobles our nature. The condensation rather than the diffusion of population is happily becoming a principle in our colonising schemes. It is the best security against retrograding into barbarism. Human improvement requires the congregation of numbers: the stimulus which is thus applied to the mind, the multiplied means of subsistence and comfort, and the force of sympathy, redeem man from the torpidity of isolated being, and render him capable, not only of looking to his contemporaries, but of dwelling with delight on the

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past, and doing something towards realising the grandeur of the future. But the tendency of laws framed to restrict the purchase of food to that which is grown in our own country is to make an agricultural people as distinguished from a manufacturing and commercial one; to scatter rather than to congregate numbers.

There may be many evils in bringing together such multitudes as are settled in large towns and cities. There is the removal, no doubt, of the check of neighbourhood and opinion upon individual conduct; but there is, at the same time, the production of so many advantages, that we cannot but regard the formation and growth of cities as marked out for the natural course of human society. We should, then, surely be suspicious of the minutest particle of legislation that tends to interfere with this onward course—that, if fairly pushed to its consequences, would bring down our manufacturing establishments at least to the supply of their immediate neighbours—that would not indeed stop there, but eventually make it necessary for us to become importers of the commodities which the nation thrives by exporting; and so wage a formidable warfare with the principles of human progression. Suppose this tendency to realise itself so rapidly as to bring its results into close contrast with the present state of society; were Manchester and Liverpool, and similar towns, the growth of trade and commerce, rased to the ground, and their site covered with the fairest harvests, with a proprietor's mansion, two or three farm-houses, and a village of labourers' cottages; would they compensate for that which they displaced—for streets and squares, for wharves and warehouses, for palaces and temples, institutions and charities, and all that mass of wealth and power, of life, energy, intellect, and enjoyment? There is not an open library, or a mechanics' institute, or a theatre, or a Methodist chapel, in London, that does not often hold within its walls more of thought, of feeling, more of the life-blood of humanity, than agriculture would ever spread over all the acres on which London stands. The most beautiful fabled miracle of antiquity was that of the effect of the poet's harp on the unconscious rocks, that moved at its melodious sounds, forming themselves into walls, and towers, and gates, and halls, and temples, a

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mighty city: and the bitterest curse of antiquity was that the ploughshare might pass over the foundations of the city, and untamed beasts there make their foul abode. In the fable and the curse we recognise, and we adhere to, the wisdom of antiquity.

The Corn Laws seem to me to be an immorality, because they tend to prevent the outpouring of nature's fertility. They actually insure the barrenness of lands that would otherwise be cultivated—they proscribe a portion of the earth which God created from yielding its produce to man whom he created to be its possessor. For what is the impulse of the cultivator to raise more grain than suffices for his own consumption? he wants to exchange it for the produce of others' labour—one portion of it for the means of erecting his dwelling, another portion for his clothing, and so on. Withdraw that stimulus, and his exertions become narrowed. It is the loom that sets the plough in motion, even though it be at the extremities of the earth. It is that which gives its impulse to the cultivator to do more than provide for himself, and those immediately connected with him; and the manufacturing products offered in exchange, somewhere or other, cause ground to be brought into cultivation that otherwise would not. And here the legislation of a class interposes: it says the means of that exchange shall stop—thus far shall the tide come, but no farther—there shall be no stimulus applied to those who live whether it be in Germany, or Poland, or America—there shall be no stimulus applied to them to cultivate their ground, and augment the produce of nature's fertility, in exchange for manufactured goods; but by monopoly this course of things shall be arrested. You shall leave the world in its rude and barbarous state; those remote and ample prairies shall only be rank with grass, and not with grain; the dark forest shall remain in its silence and its gloom. The reign of chaos shall be prolonged; creation shall cease to extend its limits under the delegated power of man; and the charter which authorises him to subdue and replenish the earth shall here be nullified. This restrictive policy keeps dormant the wondrous quality of fertility which nature has bestowed upon the soil. He has been called a benefactor who makes two blades of grass spring where one only grew before; but this system refuses

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a single wheat-stalk where might wave the ample harvest. It abstracts from human use a portion of the earth which God gave to entire humanity. It smites illimitable plains with the curse of barrenness. And shall not humanity cry aloud? The protest is the voice of nature and of nations.

Finally, the Corn Laws are immoral, for they tend to impede the intercourse between nations.

If we take the history of civilisation from its very commencement, we find that the extent of intercommunication has generally been the measure of its advance. It was thus in ancient Greece; and the civilisation of Greece, its high supremacy in the world, was probably owing in no small degree to the circumstance of its facilities of communication with different forms of government and society. Murray, in his *Disquisition on the Character of Nations*, thus adverts to this circumstance:

"We have only to cast our eyes upon the map of Greece to perceive how completely nature has divided it into a variety of separate communities. It is entirely broken down into islands and peninsulas, intersected by rivers, mountains, straits, narrow seas, all those barriers by which nature separates nations without widely disjoining them, which, while the means of artificial communication are yet imperfect, form insurmountable obstacles to the union of different states into one; but not to such an occasional and even frequent intercourse as may conduce to their mutual improvement. Another cause is afforded by that spirit of emigration, animated by which Greece, during her earlier ages, formed numerous colonies upon the fertile shores of Italy and the lesser Asia. All these states, spread to such an extent and shooting into such a variety of forms, were still united by the same name, the same origin, and the same language,—which last circumstance in particular must have powerfully facilitated the communication of ideas. Greece therefore—under which name I would comprehend Peloponnesus and the shores of the Ægean Sea—had under her immediate eye, as it were, every various aspect under which it was possible for man to be viewed. Within herself, the rude and simple Arcadia, the stern and hardy Lacedæmon, the lively Athens, the voluptuous Corinth. On one side the splendid and opulent cities of Græcia Major and Sicily; on the other, the refined

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and effeminate Ionia. Immediately beyond lay Egypt, an ancient and great people, among whom religion, laws, and government were first formed into a regular system, and were delivered over to Greece to be refined and perfected. Persia presented a military despotism and barbarous luxury. To the north, the boundless forests of Scythia and Thrace exhibited a view of man in his simplest and rudest condition. To Greece, as to a common centre, ideas flowed from all these various sources.

"Rome, at the time when her genius was at its height, held intercourse with all nations of the known world, either as subjects, as allies, or as enemies. Her great men, engaged in continual missions to the different provinces of her empire, returned laden with the arts and luxuries of every climate; while the princes or people over whom their dominion extended were sending continual embassies either to court or to purchase her favour. Greece, where all the schools of learning were then centred, was visited with peculiar frequency. It was by studying its writers and listening to its teachers that her most illustrious writers prepared themselves for the business of the commonwealth.

"The sphere of Roman observation was wider. Besides all the countries with which Greece was connected, it included the coast of Africa, then covered with splendid and flourishing cities, Spain, and the northern kingdoms of Europe. The communication, however, was not so close or so intimate. The nations of Italy, with whom alone she came into immediate contact, either originally resembled the Romans, or had been moulded by long subjection into a similar character. To this circumstance it may be partly owing that Roman literature, while it maintains a more uniform and dignified character, fails of exhibiting the variety and versatility of Grecian genius.

"The states of modern Italy were in a situation so very similar to that of Greece, that there can be less occasion to enlarge on them. Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, Ferrara, were states all differing in manners and government, yet all united by the ties of country and language. Her political, and still more her ecclesiastical, condition gave rise to an almost perpetual intercourse with every other kingdom in Europe. Italy, too, had the rare felicity

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of collecting the last lights of science, which were just extinguishing in the west, and which found refuge here in their flight from the terrors of Mahometan desolation.

"The states of modern Europe have enjoyed a greater extent of intercourse than was known to any of the nations of antiquity. They form within themselves a considerable number of nations, differing in manners, government, and national character, yet holding frequent intercourse, and connected by certain common principles of union. If they do not lie so close together as in Greece and Italy, this disadvantage is compensated by the improved means of communication. We may add the great extension of maritime intercourse, by which new worlds and new forms of society have been opened, whose existence was not suspected at any former period."*

And it is by commercial interchange—by the mutual offices which arise out of one country supplying another with what it is able to produce, and obtaining something that it values in exchange—that the less civilised are enabled to start in their career, stimulated to rise above the lower forms of social life, gradually adorned with all that the arts and legislation and government can achieve, and a result produced such as war is utterly unable to effect, because whatever services it renders to civilisation are stained with blood in their commencement, and accompanied with bitterness in their career. And this intercourse between nation and nation, a narrow-minded, selfish, and sordid legislation would restrain. It would, for its own purposes, control nature's highway across the globe; limit the communications which must inevitably arise out of a free trade; and with states, as with individuals, promote that comparative isolation which is the concomitant of barbarism.

These laws are, then, opposed to the great principles of social progress; they are a remnant of the feudal system —of a system which had its good, which had also its enormous evils, but which, whatever the relative amount of good and of evil, has done its work upon the earth. It has no longer any business in the world; its mission is accomplished. All the ends for which it was worth any thing to

* Murray's *Inquiries, Historical and Moral, respecting the Character of Nations and the Progress of Society*, p. 37, &c.

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humanity have been realised, as far as it could realise them. It no longer affords the lowly a shelter against despotic power. It no longer congregates men together into little villages or towns — cities were always beyond its might, and arose in antagonism to its influence. It no longer cherishes and exhibits to the world the features of a bold individuality. It no longer stimulates the population to the most useful and the most productive forms of laborious exertion. It now only remains for mischief; to interfere with the natural progress of that commercial spirit which is its successor, which takes up its work in the course of human civilisation, which may have its own doom also at some future day, but which has first also its work to accomplish, and its portion to contribute to the improvement of the destiny of man upon the earth.

We rejoice in the demonstration of public opinion which shows that the one must give way to the other. Feudalism is utterly incapable of being directed towards the existing purposes of society. Its memorial and its emblem may be fitly found in the castled ruins scattered over the country, rearing their desolated fronts, majestic, but only in the majesty of the past, amidst the fairest scenes of industry and culture: and sooner shall these ruins become again the princely abodes of noble families—sooner shall they again send forth, as of old, armed bands for confiscation, plunder, and destruction—sooner shall cowering villages of fearful vassals cringe at their base—sooner shall they again become seats of authority and bulwarks of strength, with petty kings in their halls, and prisoners in their dungeons—and feudalism reassume its ancient reign of pride, oppression, barrenness, and desolation—than an enactment so full of its spirit shall remain to mar the prosperity of the country, and impede the civilisation of the world. The progress of commerce is to fill the land with human beings, with beings breathing thoughtful breath, able by their industry, unchecked by interposition, to realise the means of good, and, as their moral, intellectual, and physical conditions all improve together, becoming men "who know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain."

The lowest considerations of physical good, and the highest claims of morality and religion; the dictates of the most calculating prudence, and those of the most expansive

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benevolence; the simplest justice towards those who toil for the support of society, and the soundest conclusions of those who study the progress of society,—alike demand the repeal of laws so unwise, oppressive, and pernicious as those which prevent a free trade between man and man, or nation and nation, in the produce of the earth, which is the support of their existence.

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NATIONAL EDUCATION.

No. I.

National Education is a subject which may seem to many of you very trite, and which to most of you must be familiar. It has been frequently discussed both in the legislature and by the press; and there is, in terms at least, a general agreement as to its desirableness. On many former occasions I have adverted to it in this place, but I am induced again to "tell you that which you yourselves do know," under a sense of the exceeding importance of the subject, and of the necessity, as we advance towards any practical realisation of it, for its being distinctly understood and rightly appreciated.

How great is the danger of mistake, even in individual education! When all the kindness of the parental heart is brought to bear upon quickening the understanding, how often do we find the grossest mistakes committed; powers attempted to be trained in a direction for which they were never designed or qualified; years of youth, precious years, wasted in attainments that turn to no account in after life; perhaps the very uses for which they were designed annihilated by the premature stroke of death; the unhappy parent having to say to himself, that his offspring were educated for life, and not for death; forgetting, that if death as well as life be the destiny of humanity, for death as well as for life should we be educated; and that if we believe in immortality, for immortality as well as for earth should man be trained.

The mistakes of private education are liable to be multiplied, and their mischiefs extended beyond all calculation, in connection with National Education, where there cannot be the same feeling of interest, or the same singleness of purpose, or the same absolute choice of, or control over, the agents by whom it is to be conducted. And as these must necessarily react upon individual education—as not a single mind can arise in the coming generation, after any universal system shall be established, without being di-

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rectly or indirectly affected by it—it is a subject which comes home to every bosom, to all who care for any besides themselves, to all who care even for themselves wisely, and, therefore, one which blends the strongest public interest with the deepest private concern. And this universal agreement, which it is alleged exists at the present time, as to the desirableness or even the necessity of National Education,—what is it? We often deceive ourselves on these topics of common consent. We think we understand them when there ceases to be any dispute about them; we rest in words when all are disposed to repeat the same form of words. In this instance the deception can scarcely be expected to impose upon us so much as it does in many cases, because we have only to look attentively, and we must perceive that this agreement is in little more than bare words.

All say it is needful that there should be National Education, and no sooner have they shown their oneness of expression thus far, than we find the utmost imaginable diversity. The Whig and the Tory have irreconcilable points of difference, for which they wage their party contest; the Catholic and the Protestant cannot be brought to agree on one portion of the arrangements; the churchman and the dissenter are at variance on another; the orthodox and the heretic have their topics of strife; and those who look only at what is called secular education, and those who regard only its religious character, appear to be waging an interminable and hopeless struggle. The unity is but the unity of the Tower of Babel, a conspicuous and useless object, while around it rages the hubbub of the confusion of tongues, every man striving with, and scarcely any man understanding, his neighbour.

If the mistakes of individual education produce results of obvious evil, which at least, after experience has illustrated them, he who runs may read, still greater and broader are the evils of mistake or of perversion in National Education. One mode of training altogether obstructs the progress of humanity. Essential as may be the tendencies to advance in our constitution, either in its individual development or in its social combinations, there is a training which effectually prevents them all, and brings humanity to a dead stand for century after century. We

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see this in such a people as the Chinese, or the unchanging nations of the East. Their skill in arts, or arms, or literature, or science, is just where it was ages ago, the bonds of hereditary caste preventing them from making one step onwards; while the happier nations of Europe have started forth and taken the lead of the majestic world.

There is a training by which nations are made mentally servile, the tools of persecution and of priestcraft, full of bigotry, often showing, in defence of dogmas the most absurd, and of institutions the most degrading, a courage and gallantry that might do honour to a better cause; and generally disposed to make martyrs of those who would be their best benefactors. There is a training that makes a nation warlike, that identifies all virtue with military success and glory, that sinks whatever can adorn a state, or spread happiness through the various ranks of society, in the pride of bearing their banners over other lands, and planting them on the towers and palaces of the capital cities of other regions; and that by this direction of the popular mind makes them only as wild beasts of prey on the face of the earth, more destructive from the extension of their intelligence. There is a training which makes a people sordid, which renders them indifferent to art, scornful of philosophy, reckless of religion beyond some of its exterior forms, and bows their whole souls before Mammon, by the subservience of all instruction, all institutions, to the one end of multiplying that which is called wealth, but which with them only answers its poorest and lowest purposes.

All these systems may be carried on under the form or name of National Education, and people may regard them as the accomplishment of a great work; but the God of our fathers did not mean such things as these when He girded the land of our birth with that protecting ocean whereon

> "Our flag has braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze;"

when He raised its fair hills, and spread its fertile plains, and poured its lovely rivers; when He gave it for a habitation to the noble Saxon race, and enriched their veins with the commingling stream of proud Norman blood;

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when He sent hither, to stud the land with our glorious cathedrals, those masonic bands whose craft is likest, in grandeur and variety, to the art of nature, its child and almost its rival; when He called to their mission such spirits as those of Alfred, and Chaucer, and Wickliffe, and Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Hampden, and Milton, and the long line of our statesmen and philanthropists, poets, philosophers, and patriots; when He reared high the fabric of its freedom, and struck deep and wide the fibres of its prosperity; and endowed England with her ancient prerogative of "teaching the nations how to live." What He did mean, it is the destiny of future generations, and the object of National Education, to realise.

On this as on other subjects where the detail is involved by the different advocates in endless controversy, the best appeal is to the original conception, to the idea of National Education; and my purpose in these lectures is, by endeavouring to develop that, to find a guidance through the doubts and contentions with which the subject has been surrounded in public discussion. Let the idea grow of itself, let it expand, as it were, into its own proper form, and we may then resolve at once many matters of discussion, which, taken apart and debated with the heat and strife that belong to the views of different sects in religion and different classes in society, scarcely seem to admit of a satisfactory solution.

I would not treat this subject antagonistically, any further than is absolutely unavoidable. Let us consider it with reference rather to ourselves than to others. For what are we the friends of National Education? The work depends upon the spirit in which it is undertaken; on that, even, in which it is advocated. If we all seek something else, under cover of the phrase "National Education," it is little likely to be accomplished. There will only be in the world another monstrous deception.

Let us each ask ourselves, Why are we the advocates of National Education?—why do we desire it?—why do we contemplate it as a great and good object? I dismiss at once the motives which are derived from a mere aimless benevolence, that, rushing headlong at whatever seems to promise relief to suffering, is continually blundering into the production of greater mischief; or from that associ-

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ating habit which prevails so much, making every thing, intellectual and moral, as well as material, the subject of a sort of joint-stock company, resulting only in flourishing reports, where shadows are rhetorically manufactured into miracles; and seeming to overspread the land with the waves of its beneficence, which, like the mirage of the desert, soon pass away, leaving the rock as hard and the sand as barren as before. Throwing such considerations at once out of the question, let us ask ourselves whether, in advocating National Education, we are thinking of our theology, hoping to spread the faith of our doctrines, desirous, it may be, even of saving souls, by the belief of what to us appears to be divine truth? Are we at the work of sectarian proselytism? This is an aim which, when brought into contact with the idea of National Education, becomes at once self-demonstrative of its own impropriety. We may deem our doctrines the truth of God, and essential to the salvation of the soul; but we know that wise and good people about us hold very different views, and have their antagonistic doctrines, to which they attach equal importance. We know that, divided as this country is into so many religious sects and parties, National Education cannot, and ought not to, become the machinery of theological proselytism, and could only be made so either by an unwarrantable exclusiveness that destroys all application of the word "national," or by the practice of a deception which ill accords with any honest notion of education at all.

It may be said that the salvation of men's souls is a paramount object to all others; but if it is so, and if it is to be accomplished by the inculcation of theological dogmas, then I say that Providence, by the diversity of sects and opinions which it has cherished in our country, and by the insuperable barrier which it has thus opposed to a uniformity of doctrinal tuition in National Education, has shown that it does not intend the salvation of all British souls; and who is the religionist that shall dare to fight against his own Deity? Whatever be the result as to theological opinion, inasmuch as it tends to jar with, to narrow, the nationality of education, it is evidently an unworthy object, and an unworthy accompaniment in the mind of him who looks straightforward at the one great end. I stand not here to refute or to defend any dogmatic system

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whatever, be it what it may; but to force conscience, to deceive, or to exclude, is doing evil that good may come, and attempting to march through the curse of sectarianism to the blessing of National Education.

Again: For what are we the friends of National Education? Is it to obtain political quiet?—to insure security for a particular class, or the accomplishment of any purposes it may entertain upon another class? This too is a one-sided mode of looking at the subject. There may be much, there is much, in the state of society which may tend to produce alarm in the possessors of property. It is not many years ago since the real or supposed wrongs of the agrarian population uttered their remonstrance by eloquent tongues of fire. At the present moment the outbreaks of violence, and the attempt to make certain political doctrines by force the law of the land, have excited, perhaps, even stronger feelings of insecurity and of alarm. Notions are said to be held by some classes that are incompatible with the continuance of the present distribution of property; and at all times, where there is a great mass of ignorance and of suffering, there must needs be the peril of occasional outbreaks, that may involve the damage or destruction of the possessions that men hold so dear. But will a system of National Education be ever received, of which the avowed purpose is merely the greater security of the propertied classes? Will there not, must there not, be an indisposition on the part of the people to commit their offspring to a training of which they suspect the object to be to keep them down, and to keep their children down, so as to insure all existing disparity of station? Will they not detest the institutions which they imagine are to convert their posterity through succeeding generations into mere serfs of the soil? Must it not happen that there will be tribunes of the people amongst them, with perspicacity to detect and eloquence to denounce such a system of imposition? The fact would soon appear that teaching was only meant to be the training of servility. It would close the pages whence might flow the inspiration of independence, and the *Index Expurgatorius* of the school would catalogue the library of the adult. Democracy would have its own literature of defiance. For the desired evil of servility there would be the undesired evil of insubordination. Two hos-

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tile influences would be ever at work in connection with education, and the nation really remain as uneducated as ever. We must go more fairly and honestly into National Education, if we ever expect to see it realised. Tend to the safety of property and of person no doubt it would, but it must tend to them, not by making this the primary object, but by remembering that those who are to be educated are human beings, with their sense of property, with their love of acquisition, with their capacity for happiness, with their aspiration after freedom, with all their powers and faculties; and entitled to be treated, if we offer education to them, as rational beings, who by their training are to advance to their proper position, and to realise more than they have hitherto achieved throughout all the long pages of the world's history.

Nor is it National Education that is really contemplated, when we look only to its economical advantages or to the satisfaction and convenience of one class, as the guidance for the training of another class. There are plans which seem to aim at no higher or better object than that of producing more attentive servants, more expert and industrious mechanics, for the convenience and comfort of the gentleman, the master, and the tradesman. But we might as well suppose the other class to assume its own convenience as the great end. The question may not be the same as to power, but it is the same in propriety and justice. We might as well imagine the poorer classes saying, "Your universities must be reformed, your public schools and colleges must be conducted on a very different principle; we must have a gentry trained who shall be less obnoxious to us, whose equipages shall not incommode us in the public ways; whose habits, and manners, and amusements, and tastes shall not be exclusive, and to us contemptuous; who shall not be niggardly in the property which they possess by the questionable right of hereditary descent, but who shall in all respects be a gentry fashioned to please the people." They have, I say, as much abstract right to make the demand as the richer classes have to look simply to the training of better servants and better workmen in National Education. But what has Providence done in calling a human soul into existence? God makes a man, and not a footman or a journeyman. They are the

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common attributes of humanity that belong to him, and that by education should be developed in him, instead of which we too often think of instruction as the means of hewing away a large portion of human nature, in order to produce thereby a neater peg on which to hang a livery, or a stronger cog to work in the wheel of a machine. We all know, when individual training is conducted in this way, what the consequences are. Who has not seen, when the sole object of a child's education is to prevent it from being troublesome, when its first duty is not to annoy "pa" or "ma" in the study, the dining-room, or the drawing-room, what a poor, weak, pitiful, hypocritical abortion of humanity is produced thereby! And such is nationally the result as well as individually. We must reverence God's image in his human works, and, above all, we must treat it with reverence in the conduct of education.

And for what are the women of England to be educated? For it is very remarkable, in the different schemes which have been put forward, and in the advocacy of those schemes, whether by journalists, divines, or statesmen, that we rarely find any reference to the education of women. It seems as if the world were to go on, in reference to them, precisely the same as it does now; while, somehow or other, as to the other sex, a great improvement is to take place. Now this again shows that the very idea of National Education has not properly found its way into the public mind. It cannot be that any thing should ever be realised which is worthy of that appellation, which is to leave women as they are—the poorer of them in their mechanical drudgery, wearing out all fineness of form, and sense, and taste, and soul—the more accomplished toiling incessantly to fashion intellect and character at a rate that might perhaps be appropriate to the fashioning of plaster casts, or given up to a frivolity which debases into an instrument for rendering man more selfish and coarse that which ought to be the agency of refining and strengthening and purifying his nature. Woman is, under all circumstances, left to the contemptuous neglect of legal enactment, and to that state of social dependence which can scarcely consist with expansive thought, with noble impulses, or with the highest elevation of character. National Education assuredly implies that those are not neglected, nor endowed with any

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stinted boon, who are themselves and ever must be the most efficient amongst national educators.

In these negations, I have implied much of practical arrangement; and in endeavouring to describe the spirit with which National Education should be contemplated, we shall now come to positive indications. This spirit, I say, should be one of religious obligation. We should look at National Education as a sacred task, a high and holy work, a mission from God. The conception of such a work is a harbinger of its coming, and determines its character. Who gains or loses is no question here. It is beside or below the mark. We are moving towards a new creation, and are ourselves amongst the elements and agents. Continental systems, and voluntary efforts, and party plans, and individual speculations, may have their imperfections and perversions; but they are gropings towards the true, or initiatory processes, in which the evil cannot avert the good. The application of the power of education to the masses of a community is like the Spirit of God moving on the waters. It demands the devotion of apostles and reformers in its contemplation. In no more low, in no meaner or more sordid way, can we treat that which really belongs to the production of God's image in his rational creatures. Here is a work of time, not to be prematurely brought about in its mere external forms, but to be imbued with its own spirit; and if we contemplate it in any lower point of view, we immediately plunge into gross and debasing absurdity. Nothing, in the matter of instruction, can be too high, grand, or good for this work. We shall make no aristocratical reserves of instruction. There will be no restriction to the beggarly elements of learning. Voluntarily to stunt the growth of mind, though in the peasant, is to obstruct the formation of the divine image. For no capable intellect is history too rich, science too profound, poetry too lofty, or philosophy too comprehensive.

The spirit in which National Education should be regarded is one of faith in knowledge. To me, the frequently expressed dread of this or that kind of knowledge, for this or that class of human beings, seems almost atheistic. All is of God; he is in all; the fear approaches to an assertion of the perniciousness of God. Knowledge of his works is acquaintance with their Maker. What, in

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the balance, are the inconveniences that any class of people may experience in consequence of the establishment of a National Education? No doubt, to the quacks of every profession it would be inconvenient that there should be a general and familiar understanding of the principles of law or medicine, &c. No doubt, to the affected exclusives in classical or other literature, it would be very inconvenient that their artificial monopoly of what is called learning should be invaded, and that the peasant should claim an equal knowledge and appreciation with them of what has been said by the sages and poets of antiquity. No doubt, to the monopolist, it would be very inconvenient that the laws which regulate commercial interests and national interests and profits should be understood by those at whose expense his monopoly exists and is carried on, and enriches the class to which he belongs. No doubt, it would be very inconvenient to the *littérateur* and the critic, that the weights and measures by which he estimates truth and beauty should be in the hands of the vulgar also, and that they should not only be able to use his implements, but to weigh his weights and measure his measures also. No doubt, it would be very inconvenient to the preacher, the divine, the theologian, that there should be a common power of canvassing the doctrines that he preaches, of analysing their scriptural or their rational character, and subjecting them to the test of a free inquiry as bold as or bolder than his own, and conducted with similar means of arriving at their reality; he would, probably, be sorely annoyed that fishermen and tentmakers should again have God's mission to build or batter doctrines. And, doubtless, it would be inconvenient to the statesman that he should no longer be able to misquote history with impunity; that the triumphant appeal to party authority should command no implicit assent; that he should not be able to shine and persuade by arguments addressed to men's sordid interests or varying passions, but be compelled to keep more in the straight road towards accomplishing the well-being of society. There would be great inconvenience to these and other classes; but if we are only seeking for a system which is to keep classes from inconvenience, in the name of Heaven let us not talk of the establishment of a National Education. If our purpose be above all this, then

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there is nothing in science, in language, or in literature that is too high or good to be included in the diversified and graduated arrangement of schools that should belong to a National Education. There should be the opportunity for the human mind to rise to its highest aspirations, there should be every stimulus to apply capacity wherever capacity exists. No kind of knowledge should be set apart as an aristocratical appanage; telling the people, this is too sublime for you to dream of its realisation. There is nothing too lofty for that soul which God created in his own likeness. It was the breath of Omniscience that infused into the clay the power of life, and made man a living soul. The effect of acknowledging this truth in universal education would be a reaction even on the mightiest intelligence. There walks not the genius in our land, feeling it, in crowded cities, or fair plains, or by the mighty ocean, or wherever, throughout its length and breadth, he contemplates beauty and grandeur, a temple of God, in which he "sings his stately songs," who would not derive from the atmosphere of universal intelligence, realised by National Education, a grander inspiration. The treasure of thought is like that of which we are told in the fable. The old man's sons were to dig for it, and to find it in a certain field. They dug the field all over, and they realised the treasure, as we should realise it by the universality of instruction, and the amplitude and richness of the harvest thus produced.

And as there is nothing too lofty, so is there no field of knowledge too broad, too widely extended, for common cultivation. Who can seriously represent knowledge as the source of moral aberration? who call out upon the danger of putting it within the reach of the multitude? In the allegory in the book of Genesis, the deceiving serpent is indeed made to tempt humanity with a false promise; but this mythos was levelled at the promises of idolatry, at the vain tricks of necromancy, and at the attempt to gain some acquaintance with that futurity which is hid from us in darkness that cannot be pierced; and this false show of knowledge vanished away from the world as real knowledge advanced. True science must ever tend to good. It is of God; and to depreciate knowledge, to charge it with evil tendencies, is to charge such tendency

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and spirit on the Deity himself, who is in all his works, and who lives through his works. I would, therefore, erect no barriers. I think the very conception of National Education is, that we open wide the field to every one, and invite all to advance as far as their powers will enable them. And why should not the man that has to toil for his daily bread grow rich in mind, by seeing what men have done before him that were doomed to toil also; and how such as Burns sang their songs in gladness and in joy, on the mountain-side, though there they were following the plough? Why should not he learn what those have done before him, who toiled, not with their bones and sinews indeed, but only with their brains, and there cultivated the fields of human knowledge, and reaped its harvests avowedly for the good of other classes as well as of their own? Why should not he who toils for humanity, and who contributes so largely towards the means of physical support for his brethren of the human race, know what has been the course and what the fortunes of that race, as declared in history from its earliest periods? Why should not man, although his destiny be a life of toil, know something of the mind that is within him, of the vitality that shall outlive this necessity of manual labour, of the power which in him shall be aggrandised through the ages of eternity? Oh, there is nothing too good, or too great, or too far-stretching for humanity, whatever its external condition!

National Education should be regarded in a generous love of humanity.

It is not pity for "the poor working classes," or keeping idle children out of mischief, that is wanted. There is a horrid gangrene in society to be healed, but the healing is not in the charity of giving a bit of "poor man's plaster." The plague of ignorance has its counterpart in the plague of conventionalism. Both depress the entire intellectual atmosphere. There is God's image in all, though sorely crusted over; and shall we spare the rubbing to come at it? There is that in all to love; in itself, and in its capabilities. And love is wisdom. It was in this spirit of love for mankind that the Prophet of Nazareth became the example of philanthropists, the text of moralists, the teacher of nations, the word of God, the son of the Highest, and the Saviour of the world. Not only is it true, as said

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by Coleridge, that "he prayeth best who loveth best;" but it is also true that—

> "He *teacheth* best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God that loveth us,
> He made and loveth all."

Popular Education should have the Nationality which its name implies. A system of schools, established in the spirit of religious duty, of faith in knowledge, and of love for man, would tend to the formation and development of humanity. But there is no uniform type of human excellence. Nature has set its distinctive mark on nations. Political arrangements often interfere and struggle; but generally these characteristic peculiarities seem lasting as the world itself. For each nation the world's literature should be free; but for each, its own literature must ever prove most congenial and influential. And for what quality can we love this our British race that is not embodied and individualised in some one of the great authors of our literature? The attentive eye for nature and for man, seeing poetry in the literal description of the one, and humour in the diversities of the other, we have in Chaucer. The fond lingering on the past, calling back the faded images of former times, investing them with fairer forms, and throwing back meaning and moral into the scenes where oft some "gentle knight came pricking o'er the plain," or solitary loveliness "made a sunshine in the shady place," we find and feel in Spenser. The realisation of the future, the ideal community towards which society tends though all too slowly, the hope which takes the form of fiction that it may be a greater and a deeper truth, had its chord touched by a master hand centuries ago in More's *Utopia*. Shakespeare is the unfailing type of our identification with universal and infinitely varied humanity. In Taylor germinates the piety that worships God like his own nature, budding and blossoming, singing and responding, in myriad birds and flowers, through shade and shine, the storm of ocean and the smile of heaven. That which is dignified in reverence, shrinking not from the duty of a task to make "all Europe ring from side to side," yet which evermore in meekness "the lowliest burdens on itself did lay," has its Milton. I stop at the commencement, or this enumeration

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would lead us far, through ranks of demigods, even down to the contrasted minds that divide the intellectual dominion of our own times, where may be traced, through clouds of collision and confusion, the spirits of Bentham and of Coleridge, the philosophers of reason and of faith, the analyst and the synthesist, the merciless detector of fallacies and the religious preserver of truth, minutely reforming and broadly conservative, linking the present with the past and with the future, and guiding the transition from one to the other by their combined influences. Nor does nationality live on literature alone. We inhale it from the material atmosphere in which we breathe. We grow up into it from earliest infancy. The physical peculiarities of our changing climate, diversified in beauty, nor ever wholly devoid of beauty in what seem their dreariest diversities; our ocean-bound land, with its rich plains and growing towns, its flowing streams and refreshing verdancy; more yet, our early associations, all the relations that excite feeling and the impulses that quicken thought;—all blend into one mighty nationality of influence, warming with British blood the cosmopolite heart.

Love sees Truth. In purifying and raising our views of National Education, it becomes more distinct to the perception; the idea takes a defined form, and fashions out of itself the various arrangements by which it must be realised. By anticipating it, we are educating ourselves for its approach and its promotion. The future, for which its full blessings are reserved, becomes present in some of its benignant influences. There is a dawning of new forms of wisdom and goodness on the heart. The sun is yet below the horizon; but his light is in our atmosphere, and the clouds of our sky are gilded with his glory.

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No. II.

In endeavouring to describe the spirit and purposes with which a National Education should be contemplated, I have, in fact, given an outline of the character of the teachers who should be the agents in its accomplishment. If really to promote, if even worthily to witness and rejoice in, the advance towards a National Education, implies that we contemplate it as a religious obligation, as a high and holy work,—that we look at it with a firm faith in knowledge, believing that the works of God reflect the image of himself, and that in the study of them there is always good to be reaped, and approximation to be made towards their Author; if we should endeavour to promote National Education in the sincere and fervent love of humanity, love for it in its grandeur and its excellence, and love for it also in its helplessness, its darkness, and its wanderings; and if with these there should blend a tinge of that nationality which gives its peculiar modification to the intellectual and moral character of the people of these realms,—then such should be the spirit which in the teacher should be, as it were, poured out without measure. If it should be the guidance of all in their endeavours to facilitate this great work, in him it should be the soul by which he is animated. He should live, move, and breathe, as to his moral life, under the sense of religious obligation and with this consciousness of a divine mission, with this firm faith in knowledge, with this generous appreciation of, and ardent attachment for, human nature through its boundless diversities, and with this sense of what Providence has done for our country, raising up men who, while they exhibited the highest approaches that have been made towards human excellence, also bore upon them the marks and distinct traits of belonging to our race, of having inhabited our country, and of having in their several ways contributed to the formation of that intellectual and moral atmosphere in which we move. All this must the teacher be in his devotion to his work. He is in some sense a

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mediator between the infantile mind and all objects, visible or invisible. He stands between the youthful mind and language, unfolding to the yet lisping babe that precious mode of communication which forms the first step in man's elevation above the brute creation; and which, whether it be the result of a long train of discoveries, or in some more direct and extraordinary manner was bestowed as an endowment upon our race, blends itself with all that we can attain of knowledge, and mingles also with all our shortcomings and aberrations. The instrument of deception is the instrument of truth: it is for the teacher to fashion it so that the baby hand may wield it, and grow strong and rich by its exercise.

The teacher is between the child and science. He has to bring together the varied arrangements of nature, which form the matter of the sciences, and the inward faculties that are adapted for their recognition, to work out the endlessly diversified trains of association which this communication generates; to bring home to the young mind the qualities of colour and form, the notions of time and space, as they are connected with the different objects that present themselves to its earliest contemplation; and to teach it to see, and hear, and speak, and remember, and reflect, so that all these powers shall work harmoniously in the mind, and still bear their faithful relation to the objects that are without.

He is between the child and history. He has to make him acquainted with the extent to which beings like himself have existed in different circumstances and in different nations, in the ages that are gone by. He has to lead him into the great living world of humanity, through the long record of its past development and the causes of its present peculiarities. He is between the child and the world, and has to prepare him for life,—for all that life implies, for all that is connected with its progress, and for what is to follow after its termination. He is a mediator between the child and the higher objects of our spiritual faculties—poetry, philosophy, religion. And he is to form and fashion all attainment, and to conduct all development, so that man may rise to the true dignity of his nature, and become one with the Power by which he was created. And in doing this, the teacher must naturally identify himself

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with the child; he must think a child's thought,—he must speak a child's phraseology,—he must become one even in sport with the infant mind, if he would be the guide of its progress. He must not administer the dry husks of mere verbal communication. He is not to train a parrot to repeat words of which it has no comprehension, but to call forth expression by awakening intelligence; he has to throw the riches of his own mind into the child's,—and for that he must fully realise the mind of the child in his own: he must metempsychosise with it, he must understand what its difficulties will be, where it will feel most firmly the footing of its advancing intelligence, and where it will be most bewildered and entangled, and need a helping hand to untie the difficulties by which it is puzzled; he must be the child's friend, and yet the object of his reverence, winning from him by love those mingled sensations which the great in vain strive to command, and which all the amiability of the feeble can never attract. And by such reverence, growing into friendship and confidence, and manifesting itself in an enlightened imitation and permanent respect, he must lead on, he must allure, towards the higher spheres of their existence those who are thus intrusted to his more than paternal charge. This descent of his mind into the littleness and ignorance and darkness of childhood, in order thereby to effect the exaltation of the yet unknowing, unthinking infant, is like what the apostle tells us of Christ in his greatest elevation, attained by his lowest depression, "that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth, and thence ascended up, far above all heavens, that he might fill all things?"

Such should be the teachers in a National Education. Where are they? How are we to find them? If they cannot be found, how are we to make them? When they are found or made, how are we to employ them, so as to insure the accomplishment of their work, the fulfilment of their holy mission?

We find them, say some, by voluntary education. The voluntary system, they tell us, is as good in education as it is in religion. The supply will answer to the demand. Teachers will be forthcoming when they are wanted, and they will teach what is wanted. And what has this volun-

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tary or free-trade system of education done for this country? Is it not the fact that we are at this moment, through all the different ranks and degrees in our land, and in all the various ways, and with all the organs in the legislature, the press, the pulpit, and the lecture-room, by which discussion can be carried on, seriously and zealously considering the means of a National Education? If the voluntary plan of education could supersede all this, why has it not done it? What are its results? Without looking to the immense number who are left without any instruction at all, and who, according to the general agreement of all who feel an interest in education, have yet to be provided for, we ask, What is the state of education? Whether for the poor, for whom philanthropy is anxious; or for the middle classes, who take care of themselves, and regard this as they do other objects of industry and attention; or with the Church and the aristocracy, who are provided for by the institutions of the country—what amongst all these gradations of rank and attainment is realised in this country under the name of education? How many are the instances in which seminaries of any kind, endowed or not endowed, the fruits of private speculation, of social and united exertion, or of ancient establishment, produce as their result a human being so variously endowed, so fairly and proportionately developed, so enriched with the spoils of the past, so prepared to grapple with the future, so fitted for present times and circumstances, and yet so exhibiting the ideal of what humanity should be through all times and circumstances, that "nature may stand up and say to all the world, This is a man;" and society may stand up and say to all the world, The place in which he was trained is a school? Certainly such things are by no means common amongst us.

The low state of education in this country, even where the greatest advantages are gathered around us, is the subject of common remark to intelligent foreigners throughout all Europe. Our universities do not take the lead in learning; our institutions do not take the lead in the variety and worth of the accomplishments which they communicate; our artisans do not take the lead in extent of knowledge and of taste, by which they would be enabled to start forward as from a high vantage-ground in their career of

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toil. We have lost the antique preëminence of our country; and it does not seem at all likely that we shall regain it by this chance system, this fortuitous concourse of atoms, this leaving open the great work of teaching to any body who chooses to undertake it, and to all influences which may happen to bear upon it. What can be done while the teacher is subject to no responsibility as to his attainments; while there is no such care for him as there is for the lawyer that he shall be competent, that property shall not be damaged by being intrusted to his direction in the formation of the instruments by which it is conveyed; or as there is for the medical man, who is subject to a severe investigation as to his acquaintance with the human frame, its state of health and derangement;—and while he is controlled only by parents, themselves perhaps deplorably ignorant of all that constitutes real education, and having many a lurking prejudice or sinister interest, deflecting them even from the desire that the best should be done which can be done for their offspring, morally and intellectually?

The teacher who at all approaches to the character I have indicated would have little chance of being amongst the most popular teachers, or of being chosen where the nomination is either in the many or in some unchecked patron, or of being successful in the common struggle of the teaching trade, with its competition as eager and fierce as the competition in any other department of what is called business. Oh! there are those—I have known such—that, looking beyond the narrow views of parents, looking beyond the ordinary routine with which the world around them would be well satisfied, have had minds to perceive and hearts to feel what could be done with the young spirits intrusted to their charge; have attempted to achieve something, but found obstacles rising all around them; have in their attempts lost sectarian patronage, without shielding themselves against the orthodox anathema that had gone forth against freedom of opinion; but, still more deadly, have found the evil they had to cope with in parental ignorance or carelessness, bringing tears into their eyes and pangs into their hearts for the good which they saw before them, but which mistaken affection, or mistaken interest, prevented their being the happy agents of accomplishing. While such is the case, while the good teacher, like the

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reformer, the poet, the philosopher—like every one who is before his age—has to lay his account with a kind of social martyrdom, it is folly indeed to talk of supplying the agency for National Education by the operation of the voluntary system, or of that of supply and demand. The maxim holds in the material world—it is the best regulation for commercial interests—but it does not hold in the spiritual world: the demand does not insure the supply, and the want does not necessarily generate the demand. The speculations of Lord Bacon, though they changed the whole course of philosophy, were not wanted; there was no previous demand for them; and when they came, the knowing of the time shrugged their shoulders, and said he wrote philosophy like a lord chancellor. The plays of Shakespeare were not wanted; he was not called forth by, but he created, the grand and varied drama of his country. The *Paradise Lost* of Milton was not wanted—no, not even after it appeared; and it often requires generations for intellectual or spiritual want to be brought home to men's bosoms after the supply has been presented to them.

Thus has it ever been. It was no previous epic poetry that created Homer; no previous dramatic arrangement of personages and scenes that called forth Æschylus: they created epic and dramatic poetry. And so it ever is in the world. We shall not have teachers—teachers fit to be the agency for conducting this great work—merely by desiring them; nor is the enlightened desire at all likely to precede the realisation, so as to be the cause of its production. Many think there is a market for these things; and so much have the common operations of business, and the application of capital, and the production of an appropriate supply whenever the demand was rife, affected people's mode of habit and speech in this country, that let there be some great mental work in contemplation, let a party think it desirable to have an organ for the dissemination of its principles, let men, in some measure valuing those principles, talk over such a matter,—and, instead of looking round for those whom that inspiration may have marked which giveth every good gift, and which forms the teachers of mankind in all their several departments of instruction, and thankfully receiving these and sending them on with gladness and power in the execution of their mission—instead of

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this, they shall be talking of going into the literary market, and purchasing there the appropriate abilities. Purchase a certain readiness of word-manufacturing they may; purchase a hireling and powerless advocacy they may, that, without any notion of truth, rakes together what it thinks reasons, and is too happy to silence an adversary by an *argumentum ad hominem*, to regard that it may be inconsistent with the principles it is used to support; but find the real spirit and soul by which any great work is to be achieved they never can: it is not in the nature of things, and Providence has set its brand of folly on such a conception. We cannot create the powers by which humanity is to be raised, by which some are to be God's agents for benefiting their fellow-men: we can only smoothe their path, so that where they do exist, the requisite means and appliances may not be wanting for them to achieve what they can accomplish. Our work is limited to this; all our powers of capital, contrivance, and associations are limited to this, that they may aspire to be the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

In this state of things the Church—that is to say, the clergy—comes forward and says, "I will undertake the task; consign the National Education into my hands, that I may be its guardian and administratrix; empower me to offer it to the entire community, and I will so offer it; empower me to nominate teachers, and to guide and direct their operation; and I will undertake that, under my powerful and enlightened and religious superintendence, there shall be a National Education." I shall adhere to the purpose I mentioned in the former lecture, and avoid antagonism as much as the circumstances will allow. I do not wish to rake up, and I will not on this occasion, the offensive, insolent, and overbearing terms in which this claim has sometimes been put forth, and by which it has been enforced. Let these be as they may. If this power do reside in the Church, why, let us not scruple, for the sake of a few hard words, to allow a claim which tends to real utility; but to me it seems in every way to break down—to break down utterly and irremediably.

We would first ask, How is the claim made by the Church? Is it made by it as the Church of Christ, or as

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the National Church of this country? And, if the former, why then we demand how this body makes out its claim to be the Church of Christ? It is one Church amongst many churches—some smaller and some larger. It has not the claim to be the Church of Christ arising from the majority of professing Christians being within its communion. Not merely does it lack that claim as compared with Europe, but, what is more decisive to our present purpose, it is not the majority of professing Christians of the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, and Ireland. If not the claim of the majority, has it the claim of unbroken succession? Is it the Church which Christ founded, traceable through all the long pages of history, from the east to the west, and finally fixing its abode in this country, and here flourishing in undeniable unity and identity? No such thing. It traces itself back to another Church, from which it broke off—a Church which does not own it. The Church of England recognises the papal ordination, but the Papal Church does not return the compliment and recognise the Anglican ordination. It is under the ban of the excommunication of its parent, broken and cast off from the original stem, as a rotten branch, fit only for the flames. If neither unbroken succession nor the voice of the majority is to make out a pretension, one sees no other way in which it could be done than by miracle; and assuredly the miracle comes not. The Holy Ghost is professedly communicated in ordination, but there is no such manifestation of a divine spirit and power, either intellectual or material, as can command our assent in a matter so important as this: nor of the highest dignitary of the Anglican Church does the Divine voice proclaim, in the same audible and irresistible tones as it does of Jesus of Nazareth, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him."

And suppose that claim were made out, another question still remains. If the Church of England be indeed and exclusively the Church of Christ, still we have to ask, by what authority the Church of Christ claims to take the universal mind of the people of these countries under its guardianship in infancy, to train and direct it according to its own will? I find not the charter of this power in the New Testament. Assuredly I find it not in the character, the pretensions, the acts, the sufferings, the precepts, of

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the meek and lowly Prophet of Nazareth, who declared that his kingdom was not of this world—who represented his only sceptre of ruling as that of love—who vested his followers with no power over those that did not come to them voluntarily, and submit to their teachings by the dictation of their own consciences. I find not this charter in any of the precepts of fraternal love which he gave, in his admonitions to his disciples that they should not strive to be lords and masters, that they should not call one another rabbi, that there should be no dominion amongst them, and that the only mastery of which they were desirous should be the mastery of rendering the most lowly and kindly service. I find nothing of this charter in the democratic constitution of the Jerusalem Church, where they elected their deacons by a kind of universal suffrage, and the whole body gathered together to consider of the concerns of the whole body, sending forth advice and admonition, but not commands, to other churches that were formed and located in different places. Nor do I find any thing of it in the independent set of churches raised by the exertions of the great apostle of the Gentiles. Still they adhered to the same fraternal plan; they preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and to the lordship of conscience over them that were without assuredly they never exhibited the faintest shadow of pretension. Not even, then, has the Church of Christ, were the episcopal body to make out a claim to the title, any authority to assume to itself the direction of any mind that does not submit willingly to its admonitions.

Is it, then, as the National Church?—and I take my conception of a National Church from what, as far as I know, is the only true and philosophic account of the matter—I mean that given by the late Mr. Coleridge, in his *Idea of a National Church*. There is and there should be such a thing as he describes under that appellation—that is, the reservation of a portion of the land from private appropriation, in order that it should be applied to the spiritual culture of the entire population: in which sense the national clergy, or clerisy, must include not only the teachers of theology, but the teachers of all kinds of science and of the useful arts, the teachers of all literary and historical knowledge, all who lead the mind onward and up-

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ward, and expand its faculties to the objects around them, all who exercise useful occupations bearing directly upon the development of the mind. They are all of the national clerisy, as much as the preacher—more, I apprehend, in many cases than the preacher—of dogmatic theology; and the Church of England not being this, not doing this, its clergy have no claim, it is an unwarrantable pretension, it is a falsehood, that they are, in the proper sense of the word, the National Church of this country. They are nothing of the sort. At the very best, and accomplishing most thoroughly the duties that devolve upon them, they are still only a portion of it; and the teachers in question, the teachers of schools for the nation, would also be a portion, a portion certainly not less valuable, a portion that ought not to be held less dignified in the estimation of the country, and therefore one which should not be called into existence, or employed, in subserviency to the former.

The Church is a sectarian body, and I have already shown that National Education must needs be altogether perverted from its rightful object, if sectarian purposes interfere with its establishment and its government. In its creeds, its articles, its form of prayer, in its entire establishment, and even upon many points the minutest and obscurest, the Church of England severs itself from other bodies of religionists, from other professors of Christianity. A time there was, indeed, when this system was interpreted more laxly, and therefore more reasonably; when such men as Locke and Newton did not find it necessary, on account of their opinions, to withdraw from the communion of the Church of England, and when such divines as Law and Clarke occupied its pulpits. That time has gone, utterly gone: the last sparks of that light have been trodden out beneath the hoofs of fanaticism, and of late the Church has distinguished itself by a breathless earnestness to be foremost in the race of competitive enthusiasm and dogmatism which it runs with the different dissenting sects.

Another objection to this claim is the ignorance which the clergy of this country have manifested on the subject of education; and had they not been deplorably ignorant on the matter, the people must by this time have been educated. With a society called National, with every

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advantage for working its machinery; with the powers of the hierarchy employed for its promotion, and extensive funds, public and private, from time to time placed at its disposal; with the boast in its annual reports of the education continually carried on of the youth of this country to the number of a million or upwards—with all this, where are the results? Is not the existing state of society a demonstration that in all this there has been the outward appearance, not the inward reality? There have been speeches, and reports, and schools, and grants; but there has not been education sent out on the great population of the country, acting upon them, as it must have acted if it had been real instruction, like the leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.

This portion of the subject I must, in some measure, postpone to the next lecture, when the discussion of the Bible as a means to religious instruction will lead more completely to the analysis of that notion of education which evidently finds the most favour in the eyes of the established clergy; and therefore I will only add, on this part of it, now, that it would be very wonderful indeed if men trained like the clergy of this country were skilful, either theoretically or practically, in education. What is there in the course pursued at the Universities—in the associations which are generated by other means than those of professed instruction—in the conventional worth attached to certain kinds of learning, to the exclusion of all others—in the struggle for factitious celebrity which may thus be obtained—in seeking after patronage—or in the exercise of the common functions of a clerical life, and delivering discourses on theological dogmas to adults—what is there in all this which should generate the powers, or foster the spirit, which I have endeavoured to describe at the commencement of this lecture, and produce either teachers of the people, or those by whom teachers can be best appreciated? Nor do I think the Church has shown itself sufficiently in unison with the spirit of the age in which we live—with the principles of political and social right that, if not general, are growingly adopted, and evidently destined to prevail—to prove a fit directress of the mental tendencies of the nation, and to be in such harmony with them as to forward their development.

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We give up, then, all hope of obtaining from the Church the class of persons who are wanted for the conduct of education. But still the question returns—Where are they to be found? how are they to be formed, and how employed?

The best answer I can give such an inquiry is by the suggestion of a few very simple arrangements and very practical ones, which have been over and over again submitted to the consideration of the country, and in the adoption of which I apprehend that all will be done which can be done by our contrivances or arrangements. Education should form a portion of the avowed objects and arrangements of the government of the country. There should be a minister of education, and if he must be in some measure influenced by or connected with party, and removable by its changes, there should at least be a board or commission connected with him, that should be independent of such fluctuation, and should be the proper authority to which appeal might be made, and from which the practice of licensing teachers might emanate, which I believe to be one of the most essential steps. It is adopted on the Continent, and answers extremely well. It is just this, that in instruction, as well as in law or medicine, there should not be the right of practice without evidence of competency; but that whatever a man aspires to be a teacher of, he should show that he is qualified to teach. The extent of his qualification is pointed out, according to a graduated scale, by distinctive marks of honour, which show him to be one of those from whom popular nomination, which advantageously obtains in different localities, may select those who are in such localities intrusted with the actual charge and management of education.

To cherish such powers, and to form persons so qualified, it is clear that there must be what are called Normal Schools, specially adapted for their training and exercise: and to these might well be added, in metropolitan and local institutions that aspire to the titles of Colleges and Universities, professorships of that which, unhappily, amongst all the arts and sciences, has been the last to be complimented with the honour of having professors of its theory or its practice, namely, education. In such arrangements, aiding that disposition which I described at the outset of

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the lecture, preparing its way; affording opportunity for those whose moral constitution and tendencies are their real call to the work of instruction; and when they are engaged in it, in so remunerating them that, instead of being placed in a humiliating position, they should, with an honourable competency, take rank by the side of any other profession in the country,—in these I see all the outward and institutional arrangements that can be devised for the furtherance of a plan of National Education.

And supposing this machinery gradually formed and matured, as it comes to maturity, I do not hesitate to say that it would be essential that it should be adopted in a mode that is revolting to the prejudices of many. There should, I apprehend, be no option on the part of ignorance, of prejudice, or of sinister interest, in the parents or guardians of children, as to whether those children shall or shall not be raised into the rank of human beings by instruction; that is to say, to put it in a single word, education should be compulsory—not compulsory in the way which has been falsely represented in this country to obtain—and the falsehood has been frequently repeated—in Prussia and Switzerland. Education in the government schools of those countries is not compulsory. They are provided for all—open to all: but the parent may have his child taught in any way he pleases, provided that it be taught. The fact of education is the only thing realised by compulsion. The mode, if the public mode is not agreeable to the individual who has the control over the child, may be replaced by a private one, if that private one does but answer the alleged purpose; and how that should ever be represented as an abridgment of parental rights, or a violation of English liberty, or any thing of that sort, one can scarcely imagine. It is a melancholy proof how easily prejudice is excited by the mere use of an ugly and repulsive word. Compulsion! Why, is not the whole social system one of compulsion? Is there not compulsion in the present limitation of the power of the parent, as compared with that which parents enjoyed in ancient times, when their authority extended to liberty and life and limb? The parent may not now mangle his child's limbs, he may not now take his child's life, he may not now sell that child into slavery; these are all abridgments of what was once the parental right: a

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right as sacred as, if we may so apply the word sacred, and, perhaps, not less worthy of preservation than, the right of maiming that child's mind, of destroying that child's spiritual life, of selling that child to permanent mental bondage. To keep a child uneducated is an offence which no proper construction of the objects of morality or legislation can bring within the compass of parental right—it is an offence which ought not to be tolerated.

But children are in a condition in this country which always subjects them to oppression. In some unhappy instances, they seem to be the victims of their parent's poverty; and it is said early labour is exacted from them in the manufacturing districts, in order that their parents may live on the result. Throughout society they are, to a large extent, the victims of parental error, ignorance, and prejudice, and there is for them no protection. This is the most melancholy part of the subject we are considering. Ceaselessly they are born; humanity is continually coming into the world in all its lovely helplessness, and that helplessness is no protection; it does not defend it from the perversion of the nurse, the parent, the neighbour, or that of the innumerable influences hostile to intellectual and moral improvement by which it is surrounded. Philanthropy does not protect it; it forms societies to prevent slavery in regions far remote, or it looks to the physical sufferings of poverty in the season of winter or of scarcity; but what has it done for children? How poor, meagre, inefficient, irregular, and one-sided, have been its attempts to remedy this great evil! Society is not their protection; society neglects them, takes no cognisance of them as yet; by and by, if their animal spirits should ever rise high enough to overflow, and to be an annoyance to others, then society observes them, and begins its system of coercion with them; and if they are driven by want into dishonesty, why then society notices them, and pounces upon them, and delivers them over to its police, and its magistrates, and its judges, and its juries, and its gaols; and so, through utter neglect and depravation, society only marks them, that at last it may shift them to its penal colonies, or get rid of their troublesomeness by the gibbet. Professed Christianity does not protect them; nor is the priesthood friendly to the school: contemplating chiefly its own sec-

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tarian purposes, it has rather set itself to make poor children repeat its creed, that the number of those who echo and reëcho unmeaningly its dogmas may be multiplied in the world, vainly fancying these empty sounds to be acceptable songs of glory to the Lord. Legislation does not protect them. Children are an unrepresented class; there is nothing to be got by popularity amongst them: it gives no peculiar chance at the next election; it surrounds the candidate with no cheering huzzas when he presents himself on the hustings, saves him no money in expenditure on coercion or bribery;—and so they go to the wall. Through all the arrangements of society, from first to last, they are neglected; and even parental love, which should be their ultimate resource and never-failing safeguard, is too often an abuse in claiming to do what it will with its own, instead of dedicating its own to any good, to society, to knowledge, to truth, to the spiritual advancement for which that own child was given. Oh! when shall institutions arise, institutions animated indeed by the spirit of Christ, who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"!

And if by the few and simple legal and governmental arrangements which I have just glanced at, and by the unsparing application of the national resources, and by the working of those means which will raise the teacher to his proper elevation and independence in society,—a number of such men, animated by that spirit of divine obligation, of faith in knowledge, and of love for humanity and the glory of their country, can be sent forth over the face of the land, what may we not anticipate, boldly and hopefully anticipate, in the generation of which they shall take charge, and yet more in the generation that shall follow? Under such direction, we may imagine that we see the youth of this country growing up in a better and a lovelier physical development, and more perfect natural symmetry, than they can ever exhibit while their early years are bowed down by toil, or while they are left unthought of and uncared for. Under such charge, we see their hearts expanding, love budding and blossoming within them, becoming the sub-

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stitute for rude and harsh coercion, and the depraving effects of a constantly stimulated emulation; and being in them guidance, impulse, and motive, producing in them the desire of knowledge, and reverence for those who know; and the reception of it with delight as the proper food and aliment of their souls, by which they advance, and grow in favour with God and man. Under such charge, we see them becoming rich in the stores of science; and though their hands may be doomed to toil, and the destiny may be visible upon them of having to earn and eat their bread in the sweat of their brow, yet in a really national system, where, as in the grave, and as it should be in the house of God, the rich and the poor would meet together before the Lord, who is the Maker of them all, they would rise up, though with that destiny to daily labour, not to sycophancy or servility, but with a right sense of what is due to man's own powers and nature, reverencing themselves, and so fashioning the undegrading expression of their respect for others. Under such a guidance, we may believe that we see them realising a better condition in society, deriving more physical comfort, more simple, pure, and rational enjoyment from their resources, and rising above the inducements which now continually sink humanity into the brute; that we see them forming their marriages, not from mere impulse, but so that enduring affection be the spring of exertion and the source of enjoyment, and they become the transmitters to future generations of brighter hopes, and of a higher state of being, than ever their forefathers enjoyed; that we see them advancing in life with the great duties of citizenship worthily discharged, the healthfulness of the pulse that beats in them felt through the country, even to its remotest extremities; the world evidently growing wiser and better and happier as they are amalgamated with it, and the whole race led forward in its course—those of them whom nature and God have called to the work of instructing their fellow-creatures, by superior mental powers, by the high gift of genius, finding their way clear, and rejoicing as strong men to run a race, and thus starting onwards in their course of good and glory for themselves and others. And so they pass through life; and when Death comes — at sight of the

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wisdom which knows the limits of his power, the enemy of all, as he is called, is sure to quail and cringe—he drops his loathsome mask and his desolating scythe, and stands apparently, that which he is, the commissioned angel of heaven, pointing with a wand of light to the opening portals of immortality.

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No. III.

By the principles put forth in the preceding lectures, several questions have been solved, or rather have solved themselves, and on the ground to which we have now advanced there are two others of easy solution: for if those principles be correct, National Education not only must have a religious character, but is of itself and essentially a religious work. We are prepared, then, to deal with the inquiries, Whether secular instruction and sacred instruction should be separated in national schools? and with the other question, which has also been the subject of much discussion, What is the best use of the Bible in such teaching?

National Education is a religious work; but religious in what sense? What is religion? Christianity gave the answer to the world when its Founder taught his disciples that God is a spirit; thus cutting up by the roots idolatry both in its grosser and in its finer forms; destroying, not only that blind superstition which prostrated itself before the orbs of heaven, or before images of wood and stone, believing them to be instinct with a preternatural life, but also that idolatry which only realises its image in the fancy, and, affecting to scorn all reverence offered to forms which it calls idols, yet supposes its Deity placed in a local habitation,—the undefined appearance of light, perhaps, —upon some glorious throne, and surrounded there with ministering spirits, through whom he exerts his influence upon the material creation. But in identifying the Deity with his works, in speaking of him as the universal Spirit, as the pervading principle of being and life, of intelligence, goodness, and enjoyment, Christianity annihilated idolatry; and to whatever perversion it might itself become liable in after ages, it has yet furnished a solution to the question, What is religion? If God be a spirit, religion is a spirit also. The worship must correspond with the object of that worship. Not in outward and imposed forms; not en-

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shrined, an idle image, in a creed; not enclosed within the covers of a book; but in the prevailing tone and temper of the mind, in the elevation of the faculties, in the aspirations of the heart, is religion to be found; and education, to answer to the character of a religious work, must have a tendency to their promotion.

When men's attention is withdrawn from the peculiarities of theological controversy, they recognise the religious character—as I have had occasion recently to show, while lecturing on another subject—under great diversities of form. In those to whom the world by common consent has done homage as eminently religious persons, we find no oneness of dogma, no uniformity of worship, no identity of profession; we do not find them in the enclosure of a single sect, church, or party, but scattered over the different regions of the earth, and through all forms and modes of faith. This spirit has been recognised in such Churchmen as Jeremy Taylor and Hooper and Barrow; in Dissenters, like Watts and Doddridge; in men who have departed widely from the received faith, such as Milton, and Locke, and Newton, and Lardner; in such Roman Catholics as Fenelon and Sir Thomas More. We might even go beyond the regions of the Christian faith, and take the Mahometan, or ancient Pagan, or any system of religion which has ever maintained itself in the world, and still we should find here and there some one or other whom his contemporaries, and posterity after them, so far as they had the knowledge of his character, have never hesitated to associate with the term religious. And if we observe the characters of scripture history, we do not see there any one type of religion to be received as exclusive. If in Jesus of Nazareth, who is worthily regarded by his followers as presenting a perfect pattern of devotion and morality, we see religion in the form of human affection, of a love expanding wide as the boundaries of the human race, extending to all created beings, and ascending upwards towards the Creator, this is by no means the exact type which we find in those who are also, though not equally, held up in the same records to our veneration. In the apostle Paul, religion takes more of the argumentative character. With him it is an intellectual system, having its array of propositions, and its proving and disproving, and seemingly bearing more affi-

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nity with the logical powers of his mind than with any other of his faculties. In David, we behold religion in all the violent outbreaks and torrent gushings of passion flowing through his lyric compositions, and giving them their peculiar elevation and power. In Moses, again, religion takes the form of institution: it fashioned itself into laws and social arrangements, in which he held it forth to the children of Israel; and over them it has exercised a dominant power through the course of ages, and in every vicissitude of national prosperity and adversity.

If there be no one exclusive type of religion,—if it consist in a certain harmonious development of the powers and faculties, and in a general raising of the tone of the mind towards the principle which pervades and unites all things,—why, then, it is independent of dogma, it mixes itself with every topic of thought, feeling, and action; and it is to be found, not simply in a course of theological institutions, but in whatever can be communicated from mind to mind, in whatever can be received by individual intelligence from the world around us.

Religion is not a science, to be taught like geometry; it is not a practical art, to be acquired like any handicraft; it is not a work which a man by his own toil may realise, as he produces a book; but it is in his relation, and in his strong and practical perception of that relation, to the universe around him, and to God by whom that universe was formed and is supported; it is a life, a spirit, a soul animating all things, and, like the Deity its object, pervading all things.

Such teachers as were described in the last lecture, men harmonised in spirit with the great conception of National Education, must needs be religious teachers; that is to say, they would convey religion in whatever they taught, by the manner of teaching. They would teach science religiously, not by squaring its principles to the speculations of theology; not by blinking a geological fact, lest it might not correspond with the Mosaic hypothesis of the creation; not by deviating in any one thing from the outward truth of science, as that is ascertained by observation and experiment,—but by leading the mind through the regions of knowledge, with the attention constantly awake to the laws, to the harmony of arrangement,

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and to the apparent oneness in the origin, tendency, and operation by which all sciences are linked together, by which all are made but branches of one great course of instruction; and by which all show themselves to be what they really are—the means of communication between particular intelligence and universal intelligence.

Such teachers would teach history religiously, but not by theories of continual preternatural interposition; not by taking a half view of facts; not by looking at the storm, and telling us how strangely it was allayed at the moment of danger, and saying nothing about how the storm was raised; not by laying out and cutting and parcelling the events, whether of individual or of social record, and here and there imagining a crisis at which they introduce the interposition of God; but by developing that providential plan which is the great subject of history, by marking the progress of humanity through its long advance from a condition of barbarism to one of civilisation, the tendencies of which are still visible around us, and may be traced in every direction pointing onwards to futurity, and serving as a guiding star to those who would most wisely steer their course towards the continuous improvement of society. This is teaching history religiously; this is viewing humanity as one, and endeavouring to arrive at the laws by which its progress is regulated, and regulated with the same certainty, with the same wisdom and benignity, and with the same harmonious and beautiful results, as the growth of the individual plant or the individual animal.

Such teachers would inculcate morality religiously. It would not with them be that imposition of arbitrary laws, with an arbitrary sanction annexed to them, which so frequently occasions a latent disgust, a suppressed insurrection of feeling, with which the individual, perhaps, has to struggle all his life, and in consequence of which he often loses his sense of consistency with himself, becomes a criminal in his own eyes, and prepared for sinking into the lowest depths of abasement; but the science and the art of well-being. To teach moral philosophy religiously is to develop the tendencies of human nature, to show its varied types, to endeavour to ascertain how each advances towards its fair and full development, and, in so doing, advances towards its highest happiness.

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We might follow this train of thought through all the varied topics of instruction; for whatever belongs to education at all ought assuredly to belong to National Education. Poetry, literature, art, and the contemplation of nature would, in this way, be religious also; not by the addition of dogma, or of devotional form, but by putting the mind into the best position for being rightly impressed by the proper qualities of their different objects or productions. For instance, any plant that grows is religious; the passion-flower is so: not by being what some divines have called "spiritualised;" not by pointing out how its stamina present the form of a cross, or how its petals are the same in number as the twelve apostles; but by the harmony and gentleness of its colouring, by its trailing loveliness, and by the beauty with which it throws out its tendrils, and interweaves its graceful form with forms of kindred grace, or of greater strength and firmness, which nature may have placed in its neighbourhood, to bring out its most harmonious combinations.

So music is religious, not merely by being linked to words expressive of supplication or of praise, or enumerating the attributes of the Deity, and declaring the homage which devotion renders to those attributes; but when its strains are felt as an agency acting upon the soul through the sense; when it makes the nerves thrill; when it touches and purifies and elevates the mind; when it becomes over us a power and an influence in which God seems to communicate with man, as he does through the harmonies of nature. In like manner, the religious character of any art whatever is in its proper action on the faculties of our moral being, and in the separation of that action from all the low-mindedness, and vanity, and extraneous modes of thought and feeling, which are only degrading, although they too often are made paramount. And poetry—poetry is ever religious, because it is poetry, in so far as it is the imaginative representation, the idealisation, of actual objects; and as it envelopes them in a rich and glowing atmosphere of thought and feeling, such as only genius can create, the state which this implies, and the state which it produces, are real religion; and Shelley was religious when in his poems he was attacking even the personal existence of a Deity: it was but in him the exacerbation of

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religious feeling—of real devotion, overflowing in an antagonism which was intellectually misdirected.

God is in his works,—in the works of external and material nature; but yet more is he in that grander class of works which he produces through the agency of human genius. There his power is put forth in a higher world; and those demonstrations of it in literature, poetry, and art, to which the teacher, we presume, leads the attention of his pupil, and which he brings home to the feelings of his pupil,—these are the religion of that portion of his education. And in the arrangements of a school, the alternations of solitary occupation and social intercourse, which must be in some measure in the direction of the presiding power of the institution, should also be arranged religiously. There is religion in the inducements to solitary thought, the beneficent operation of which in early life is manifested by all experience. It is in the first workings of the mind, trying its own powers in every direction, and looking inwards, and in the character so formed, that we trace the best presages of religion in after life,—of that religion which elevates the feelings, and directs action to its most useful purposes. In communication with one another, it is religion when there is a generous feeling of equality, of social affection, and of respect, rendered only to the mental and moral qualities that are its proper objects; and the school is irreligious, whatever doctrines or catechisms may be taught, in which the opposite feeling prevails; in which emulation is excited; in which pride is encouraged in one class and servility in another; in which the young brotherhood of humanity is severed into distinctions that may be unavoidable in after life, but which certainly ought not to be anticipated by voluntary arrangement in the training of youthful life. Hence the desirableness, in any thing like a plan of National Education, that the school should be such, the instruction so extensive and so good, and so fairly administered to all, according to the opportunities of receiving it, that there should not be the differences that must exist in the world afterwards; but that there, as in the grave,—there, as in the helplessness of infancy,—there, as in the presence of God,—the rich and the poor should meet together, conscious only of their common brotherhood in the presence of the Lord, who is the Maker of them all.

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Without this, National Education degenerates at once into a charity-school for the poorer classes, where they may come, like beggars, to have their modicum of knowledge doled out to them,—great care being taken in weighing, as it were, every atom of science so attained, to a scruple, that there may not be more bestowed upon them than will be consistent with the attainments of the classes that are placed above them in the relations of society,—where it is inculcated upon them that they are to receive it with thankfulness as a boon, that they are to regard it as charity bestowed upon their necessities. Nor should the children in such schools be taught to look forward to the time when attainments are likely to recommend them to the notice of patrons, when they are to qualify themselves for shining at examinations; thereby putting themselves in a way to obtain a livelihood in an easier mode than their less fortunate fellows. Distinctions of this kind are fatal to any thing like National Education; and, however they may be patronised by persons professing religion, they strike at the very root of religion. They are most irreligious and anti-Christian.

Religion, then, properly so called, is in all things in which the teacher holds communion with his pupils; and it is there, not by any arbitrary act of his own, but by the very nature of the human mind, and of the objects in relation to which he is the communicator of knowledge. Separate sacred from secular teaching! Why, the thing is utterly impossible; they are blended together as the mind and the body; they intermingle so that we cannot extricate one from the other; and if we look at them objectively as well as in relation to the human mind, the same fact obtains there. There is not a chapter in the sacred book that has not in it abundance of secular matter; there is not an object in nature that is not rightly held sacred.

Going through the whole course of science, of history, of practical discipline, of literature, of poetry, and of art religiously, the teachers whom we are imagining would of course employ the Bible religiously. Here we come to the other question which I mentioned, as in the way to present itself in this lecture, How should the Bible be used in public or national schools? Clearly not as a class-book; not as a book in which the child learns to spell and read; not as the wearisome machinery of his first

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mechanical attainments in the art of knowledge. The evil effect of this premature familiarity is so obvious as scarcely to require illustration. There are many who have suffered in their religious associations, and in their regard and reverence for the Bible, through many years, in consequence of its misapplication in the early period of their lives. Lord Byron has adverted to the different degrees of interest which he felt in the recollections and scenery of Greece and in those of Italy. The Latin classics were the means of his school training. Whatever of poetical beauty, of grand and interesting association, might be treasured there, and however adapted the scenery through which he afterwards travelled might be to bring it home to his mind, still he could never overcome the recollection of "the drilled dull lesson, forced down word by word." The romantic predominates over the classical in the Italian portion of his pilgrimage. Whilst, becoming acquainted with Greek writers and Grecian history later in life, when they were more the object of his voluntary contemplation, with reference to that country his soul was at once animated by its best inspiration; his thoughts flowed freely, fully, and richly; the strain of his song ever became more elevated; and his grandest productions, and those most likely to endure and give permanent lustre to his name, were produced by feelings that would have been prematurely crushed in his mind had the volumes of his early training been Greek rather than Latin.

There should be a reverential feeling even as to the form of a book; there should be a species of affectionate regard to that which, though unconsciously, and only through the means of a complicated mechanical apparatus, yet presents to us treasures of thought and of emotion, the records of the wise who have gone before us in the world, teachers of the human race, and the results of the communication between them and the Source of all light and life; but this reverent feeling cannot possibly be preserved towards the Bible if it be made the common school machine, the mere tool of early and mechanical instruction. Nor need I dwell on that abuse of the Bible which consists in pressing its separate sentences into the service of theological doctrines, regarding them simply as means for authenticating some dogma which has gained favour with the

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founder of a sect, or with the compilers of creeds and articles: thus, instead of introducing the venerable books of the Old and New Testaments as gifted instructors into the mind, imposing on them the menial duty of being always ready, as it were, to answer the bell of a doctrine that summons a text to its aid, and sends it forth to bear truth, like a message to submissive consciences.

There is a plan prevalent amongst the leading churchmen of the present day of making the Bible the instrument of intellectual culture in national schools—of teaching all the science and history that is to be taught by and from the Bible; that is to say, they would lead the pupils through a long course of scriptural reading, and as a question turned up of profane history, or of science, or of natural history, of geography, or astronomy, they would give them that information, relying on the Bible as a sort of thread to hold together the different kinds of knowledge thus communicated. Now, is the Bible framed for or capable of this sort of work? The first objection is, that it implies the separation of the different social classes in nominally national schools; for this plan of teaching is not proposed for the aristocracy; it is imagined that those who have wealth to command the best means of education will still be trained in some mode analogous to the course now pursued with them. No proposition is advanced for altering the discipline of our universities or endowed schools, or that of the higher class of private schools; it has never been contended that in these the Bible should be made the source of all knowledge, and that all language, science, and history should be imparted through its medium. No, they are to be taught in very different modes: it is only for the charity-schools of the poor that this misnamed scriptural education is devised. Aristocracy is to hold on in its own trim vessel, with sails outspread and colours flying; while poverty is to be tied to the Bible, like the poor child on the plank, there set adrift, left "alone with God," but left alone with no feelings that are likely to germinate into love or gratitude towards his fellow-creatures. This is the degradation of the Bible, of education, and of poverty all together.

How can science be taught in this incidental manner? The teaching must be conducted most irregularly; and

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these scraps of knowledge picked up here and there, in pursuing a course the main interests of which must be so widely different, will seldom be found with any degree of facility or felicity to dovetail into one another, so as to render possible the subsequent construction of something like systematic acquaintance with the matter in hand. It must often be very obsolete science that is taught. The notions of astronomy, and of witchcraft, and of the various processes in natural history, which have long been banished from the world by the advance of science, and which remain on the pages of the Bible as matters of history, the relics of opinion which experience has corrected, must, if the Bible is to be made the source of all secular teaching, be inculcated in their obsolete form from its pages, or else there must be a running commentary of correction by the teacher upon his text-book.

In aristocratical education in this country, perhaps something analogous to this plan has been pursued, substituting for the scripture the writings of classical antiquity. They have been made the great agency of early education, continuing prominent even until its conclusion, and the introduction of the pupils into active life and the business of the world. And has the result been such as to stamp the mark of wisdom on the plan? Has it not continually sent forth men the most incompetent into public and influential life, to the functions of magistracy and of legislation? has it not presented us with lawgivers ignorant of the very first elements of political economy, unacquainted with the bearings and tendencies of the most important existing interests, not knowing how they were to be promoted, and ever and anon unconsciously doing them damage by their ignorance; unacquainted with the nature and extent of our colonial relations, and having to ascertain by inquiry, when they began to legislate, where this and that wide and far-spread branch of the British empire had its commencement, and how it was nourished, and what was its capability; ignorant of the history of their own country, and led by that ignorance into continual blunders as to the tendencies of society, and the political rights of different classes, whether social or religious? And are these consequences that should lead us to look for success by applying such a scheme to the Bible? Has the

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success of classical mythology with the aristocracy been such as to invite us to try the experiment on the Christian scriptures with poverty?

A fatal objection to this scheme of teaching is, that the book thus employed must be sacrificed in the operation. The plan itself has so strong a resemblance to the system of Jacotot, which made some noise in the world a few years ago, and which maintained that all things were in every thing, and that all natural and moral philosophy might be taught in the course of reading *Telemachus*, that we cannot but ascribe it to that source, although it has been taken without acknowledgment. But what becomes of our interest in a book which has been cut up into a set of pegs on which to hang every variety of instruction and information? How would that book be read afterwards? What feeling can it excite? What unity can there be in any subsequent study of it, however sincerely and earnestly that study may be directed? If such a plan were to be pursued at all, we would rather that the most worthless, the most uninteresting, book in the language were made the vehicle of conveying incidental information not to be found in itself, than that a book should be taken which is and must be, by the richness and variety and spirit of its contents, the most powerful means of stimulating the best and sublimest thoughts. How would it work, for instance, if the plan were tried with one of the dramas of Shakespeare? Take the beginning of *Hamlet*. The scene is in Denmark: a hint for a lesson of geography. Sentinels, in coats of mail, patrol the stage: then comes a description of ancient armour, its disuse, and the weapons of modern conflict. The ghost appears: hence a lecture on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. There is a castle in the back scene: the origin of feudalism has to be inquired into, and its effect traced on the history and fortunes of humanity. Cannon are supposed to be fired off: and then is the occasion for a dissertation on the mode of mixing up gunpowder, or on the history of the discovery, and the change which it has made in the condition of modern nations, and the art of modern warfare, as compared with that of antiquity; or a lesson of chronology, suggested by the anachronism. What child, after having this multifarious collection of matter inserted into, or hooked upon, the poetry

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he was reading, could form any notion of the real spirit of that poetry, of the human character and feeling enshrined in it, or of that construction of the course of events for the development of the character and action which resembles the productions of creative power, and in regarding which the human mind feels itself in a situation—as far analogous as the infinite disparity admits—of a Creator looking down upon a work harmoniously arranged, and moving on to the consummation of the purposes of its author?

Perhaps one of the most complete proofs of the absurdity of this plan is in an attempt at its practical application which has been made in connection with the schools called "National," the Church schools of this country. I have in my hand a little book entitled *Elementary Arithmetic*, in which, as in books on other topics of instruction, the so-called National Society has endeavoured to make the Bible the vehicle of intellectual culture; and this book is produced by a clergyman, the secretary of the society, for facilitating this purpose. I open it at the page in which the child is led to the not very complicated attainment of numeration; and the first of the second set of examples of numeration, the object of which is simply to teach the child that the figure 3 and three ciphers stand for 3000, runs thus:

"The children of Israel were sadly given to idolatry, notwithstanding all they knew of God; Moses was obliged to have three thousand men put to death for this grievous sin (Exodus xxxii. 28). Tell me, without the slate, what digits you must use to express this number, and in what order they must be placed."—p. 25.

Here are the ideas of idolatry, of punishment, and of massacre called up into an infantile intellect simply to guide it through so simple and easy an operation as that of putting down on a slate or figuring in the mind the numerals which express three thousand. I go on to the next example:

"The fierceness of the wars they fought, on entering the land of promise, may be judged of by this fact, viz. that 1, 2, 0, 0, 0 men and women were slain at the taking of one city (Joshua viii. 25). [N.B. Read the digits one by one, but do not state the number.] Tell me then how many died."—*Ib.*

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And so, to arrive at the knowledge how to write down twelve thousand, the child's fancy is carried into fierce wars, to a land of promise of which one nation was taking possession by driving out another people, to the capture of a city, and to the destruction of twelve thousand men and women. Another example runs thus:

"Write down 4, 9, 9, 9, 9; read off what it stands for; then write down the number which is next above it. What is this? (50,000.) This is the price (in pieces of silver) of the impious books which the people burnt who were taught by the apostle to know and to worship the living God (Acts xix. 19)."—*Ib.*

Here is a lesson on the existence of impious books—of books so bad that they are to be burnt—burnt by tens and twenties of thousands, in consequence of their impiety: all this conveyed to the mind of a baby who is just learning the operation of writing down fifty thousand! And, after all, the information is falsely conveyed. It was not so much the impiety of the books as their connection with the supposed arts of sorcery and magic that condemned them: they contained spells and incantations by which it was thought that spirits could be raised; and when their possessors were converted to Christianity, they wished to renounce such "curious arts," and burned the recorded spells, that they might be under no temptation afterwards to have recourse to them. Many a devout Christian, if he is also an antiquarian, would prize highly some of the books then burnt, and would not perhaps find them unconnected with the dissemination of religious knowledge. But thus it is that the suppression of productions not agreeable to the ruling ecclesiastical powers is suggested to the mind in an indirect, if not a dishonest, manner, and at a time when it would probably strike a deep root and influence the feelings of after life. At present the *odium theologicum* is strong enough; sectarian warfare is waged with quite sufficient bitterness; the disposition to judge and to condemn, the accusation of "idolatry," claims of exclusive salvation, and the denouncement of the pains of everlasting damnation, are rife in the theological world, springing from notions which probably, in the great majority of instances, are imbibed in after life. To bring all this to a higher degree of development in youth, in infancy—to

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stimulate feelings of this sort at a time when they may be expected to grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength—oh! this is what would give the prospect to our country of a sectarianism yet more bitter and intolerant than any which it has hitherto witnessed,—would cover the land with cursing as with a garment.

A religious teacher will use the Bible as he uses every thing else; he will follow the course of nature and of scripture; and as he teaches religion from them, so will he from the Bible. If the scriptures be true, nature teaches religion. The heavens declare the glory of God, the firmament showeth his handiwork, and the earth is full of his goodness. But how do they illustrate this? In the starry heavens there is no one constellation isolated from the other constellations, which stands out as the religious or sacred constellation, leaving the rest to common astronomy. In the different regions of the earth there is no one country which is a sacred country, in which we are to find preëminently that which tends to produce religious knowledge, religious thought, religious feeling, while all other lands belong only to common and profane geography. These distinctions exist not in nature. All the stars and constellations declare the glory of God, and they all belong to the science of astronomy; all the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord, and all its regions alike belong to the instruction of the geographer.

The spirit of religion is all-pervading; and as we find it thus interblended with whatever can promote knowledge, so is the Bible, and similar use should be made of it. This should be as much as possible voluntary, and adapted to the peculiarities of the different dispositions of children. They should be led either to the simple narratives like the history of Joseph, or to the lyric compositions of David, or to the touching parables of Christ, or to the argumentative discussions of Paul, or to the profound mythi of Moses, or to the sublime effusions of the prophets, as their own expanding sagacity, and as their turn of mind and power of attainment, qualify them for the reception and appreciation. And in this pursuit the teacher has the course of Providence for his guidance. He sees how the Jews were trained until they produced such instructors for the universal world as Christ and his apostles; first by external wonders, the

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apparent convulsions of nature, thunder and lightning, and the parting waters of the ocean; and then by the growing perception of the order and beauty, the diversity and grandeur, of nature in its quiet movements, and in those laws which obtain from age to age, and the operation of which is renewed every morning and every evening. First, they were an isolated people, like the child withdrawn from his fellows for the purposes of reflection and self-formation; and then they were made a blended people, proclaiming a religion that was for all nations and kindreds and tongues, and was intended to unite the whole population of the world in the bonds of brotherhood. First, they were under distinct direction, command, and prohibition—"Thou shalt do this," "Thou shalt not do that;" and afterwards led on to the reception of the general moral principles by which man may guide his own course, and find in himself direction for all the diversity of circumstances as they arise in his path of life. First, the spiritual was intermingled with all their temporal associations, institutions, and arrangements; and then it was exhibited in its purity, apart, that it might elevate them above the world, and above that very machinery which had rendered them able to subdue the world, and to reap from it its best blessings. Thus were providentially trained the instructors of all nations, and analogous is the course which the enlightened teacher will pursue. So will National Education be a religious work; not by the mechanical addition of doctrines or of forms, but by the spirit which unites all knowledge and all sciences and arts, and consecrates them all, and raises them to their noblest influence upon the powers of thought and the affections of the heart. So will the pupils be led to love their God, whose spirit they trace in all things and identify with all things, with all their heart and soul, their mind and strength, and their neighbour as themselves; and if this be not a sound Christianity, most fit to be the national religion, pervading National Education, let Parliament and Convocation try to make a better, if they can.

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No. IV.

It is impossible to imagine the establishment of a National Education without perceiving that it must have important accompaniments and results. It cannot be the mere addition to the present state of society of a certain amount of juvenile instruction. Not only must the effect spread far beyond this, but National Education itself is the realisation of one of certain social tendencies, and its progress shows that the other tendencies are making progress also, and that at nearly the same time, and as portions of the same movement, they must come also into obvious existence. To suppose that it could exist apart from other changes and momentous consequences would be as unreasonable as to imagine that the discoveries of Columbus had only added so much soil to the known world, so many acres of forest or prairie, without any other alteration in the condition and prospects of human nature and society; or that the printing-press had only enabled men to copy with more facility, to multiply books better, than by the slow process of manuscript, and there an end. We know it was not so in these instances; and the object of the present inquiry is to ascertain the natural adjuncts and results of National Education,—those of which it is at once an index and an agency. Amongst the first, we may infer, will be the general adoption of continuous means of instruction and intellectual gratification. It will never do to provide for early education throughout the great mass of society, and yet think nothing of educational means for adults—I do not mean for adults who may live at the same time with the first race of children to be educated, but for those children themselves when they become adults. It is a blunder to suppose that education can stop at a certain time of life, that after a man has arrived at that age he has done learning, and has then only to act and to enjoy. Wherever this disposition exists, it only amounts to a proof that teaching has altogether failed of its purpose, that it has not inspired the love of knowledge, that the being is

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not educated. All great authors and artists, as in their works we trace their characters and intellectual history, evince that their progress continued to a late period of their lives, that there was no point at which you can draw the line, and say, Here their education ended, and from this time they may be regarded as the world's guides and instructors, but not as self-improving beings. They were still in their own course of training, and so they remained whilst they retained their faculties. The statue of Lord Bacon on his monument not merely preserves a resemblance or commemorates a fact, but typifies the character and course of his intellectual being by its meditative attitude and expressive inscription, *Sic sedebat.*

It seems to be commonly supposed that while those whose business is literary occupation may go on continuously with the work of self-cultivation, the rest of society is exempt; it is something which, when they leave school, they may do by proxy, and contentedly gather the crumbs that fall from others' tables, being themselves employed about what they think more substantial fare. But this cannot be, even with the poorest. If National Education does its work upon them, they will leave school with the thirst of knowledge, and of intellectual advancement and expansion; they will feel a desire that, once awakened, cannot be quelled, but will either find means or make means. In this, as in the other portions of the subject, I am not endeavouring to inculcate what should be done, so much as to delineate what will do itself; for education rightly conducted will generate means and appliances for the continuous progress of after life. There are those who say, that when the youthful poor have been taught, all that they can possibly have time for afterwards will be to do their work, read their Bibles, and go to church; but if this be all, we may safely affirm that the education which precedes can be so in name only, and not in reality. The mind once awakened to a sense of its powers—and it should be the province of education so to awaken it universally—will crave its proper aliment; it will need an enlarged church and an illustrated Bible; it will look after the doctrines, the precepts, the histories, which are to be found not only within the walls of the ecclesiastical building, not merely between the covers that hold together the books of

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the Old and New Testaments, but those which are spread over the face of nature, written on the heart of man, and traceable in the records and traditions of the past; it will search in all directions, and will find time—even with the present hard destiny of the many to almost ceaseless toil—sabbath time and other time, created hour after hour by prudence and foresight, by temperance and industry, by better-ordered homes, and by more favourable means of external and social intercourse and assistance—it will find and make time for mental existence and growth.

And what aid is needful? Not large private libraries, yearly becoming less necessary, even to those whose occupations are the most intellectual. Combination, coöperation, and, if required, the provision of the public purse called in, must follow up National Education, by placing within the reach of all such literary appliances and resources as are required by the continuous exercise through life of the intellectual powers. There must be something more; and there will, if education have done its work, be the desire for something more, than mere chance and desultory reading, and picking up a scrap of information here and there: there will be the craving for books which individuals seldom think of or have the means of buying for themselves; something going beyond what is required by the sphere of their occupation, or by the provision for their chance amusement: and in literary establishments, scattered over the face of the country, will be found, not only the provision of intellectual food for the many, but also the best encouragement and reward for the producers of that intellectual food. The producing mind of this country needs such a stimulus. The age of noble patrons has long gone by; poets have ceased for many a generation to be the retainers of lords, and to stain their immortal works by fulsome and flattering dedications. The age of bookselling patronage—which succeeded that of noble patronage—is also in its decline; it has ceased to realise the clear and tangible good which at first it accomplished; it has become in itself a monopoly, where the best service to society is frequently the worst paid and encouraged; where the dissemination of the means of knowledge is subject to the most sordid maxims of commercial profit, often perverting it from its best and most useful course. And it is difficult to antici-

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pate what the next stage must be, but one in which, by the power of combining numbers of men to elicit their appreciation of what is most generally worthy, a mart shall be created for those works which most essentially tend to the benefit of society, and thus the best stimulus be given for their production and circulation.

And if such are the probable results of National Education as to intellect, there may also be expected a kindred operation as to the encouragement of genius, and the development and exaltation of the powers of art: for in this way the people will not merely have cheap editions of the best authors, with all the defects which are inherent in such a mode of presenting good authors to the public; but they will have free and frequent access to the costliest and best-illustrated and most adorned editions of those authors; they will be led from the domain of intellectual power into the kindred domain of artistical genius. And when has genius felt its strongest impulse, when has it put forth its highest powers, when has it produced its grandest results, but when there was the most extensive, the most multitudinous appreciation of the miracles which it achieved? Phidias sculptured gods for adoring Greece to worship; Raphael painted madonnas for adoring Christendom. What is next needed is the national spirit, rising in its strength and power to supersede the individual patronage that keeps down the taste and the labours of art, and to excite it to works worthy of the national name, illustrative of the national character, and tending to national enjoyment and progress; and such works, we may be confident, would be produced under the power of that extended appreciation which would be one of the best results of National Education. I anticipate, therefore, amongst the first and most obvious consequences and accompaniments of National Education, that we should have throughout the country institutes, libraries, museums, pictorial exhibitions, theatres, oratorios, every thing which could at once gratify the taste, supersede the gross enjoyments of ignorance, and act and react upon national culture and progress.

In the next place, I apprehend that National Education would be sure to pave the way for a great improvement in the condition of woman. Her condition has always been a test of the progress which society has made, a sure and

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unerring test through all the different stages of social advancement, through all the varieties of her own condition,—from the beaten slave that she is in the savage state, from the inmate of the harem which she is in the semi-civilised arrangements of oriental empires, to the subordinate partner of man's life that she is in common European society. There may be controversy about the cause to which this improvement in the condition of womankind is to be ascribed, some resolving it wholly into the advance of civilisation, others attributing it exclusively to Christianity. It does not matter, as to our present subject, which of these theories be adopted: let it be one or the other, let it be civilisation or let it be Christianity, I think there can be no doubt that National Education would of itself advance civilisation, would be in itself a most important step in the progress of civilisation; and, on the other hand, the sturdiest advocate for resolving religion and Christianity into mere dogma still cannot deny, that through the atmosphere of intelligence the orb of religious truth shines much more brightly and gloriously than through the dense fog of ignorance. So, take it either way, the result alike follows that National Education points towards an improvement in the condition of woman.

Brute force, in a savage state, is the great difference between man and man. It is that which makes the possessor of property and the outcast, the master and the slave, the leader and the follower, the king and the subject. As society goes on, this difference becomes less and less. Some difference it still may make in the countries of modern Europe, and in our own. Yet it is but little in any circumstances; and as to legislation and opinion, there it has vanished altogether. But the effect of the disparity of physical strength between man and woman has not so vanished: it is much more practically felt, and its results are deep and broad in the legislative and social wrongs which the weaker sex has still to endure. There cannot be a doubt, I think, that the progress which has obliterated he distinction, arising from superior physical force as between man and man, is advancing also towards the obliteration of the results of that distinction as between man and woman. The work which man has to do in the world is substantially the same with that which is before woman. Like him, she

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has a being to develop; physically, with more of grace and loveliness, though with less of strength; intellectually, with more of taste and fineness of perception and discrimination, though with less of logical power and continuous application; morally, with more of meekness and kindness, of patience and endurance, though with less of determinateness, energy, and activity; but still the great object, alike in both cases, is the development of the qualities of that being with which God has endowed us, and their harmonious arrangement and cultivation, so that it may more perfectly answer the ends for which existence, and its accompanying faculties, were bestowed upon us. But when we look around us in society, do we not see much indeed that is yet to be accomplished before this end can be even approached?

When one woman, whose name should have been a protection in her life, as it has been a glory ever since her death, and will continue to be so, writes to a friend, that she is compelled to make it a principle never to forgive an insult, because she has no other means of protection; when another woman, whose unwearying industry and splendid genius had realised a princely fortune, is obliged submissively and deprecatingly to beg of her drone of a husband that he will not so bequeath it as that her comforts shall be dependent upon the disposition of others; when suicides are committed, because there are not openings for industrious and honourable exertion, such as may realise the means of existence and the prospect of comfort; when thousands are annually made the victims of licentiousness, driven to it in the vast majority of cases, not by any depravity of nature or of habit, but by the hard pressure of poverty; when, after a long legislative conflict, through session after session, the paltry boon is at length won from reluctant power, of granting to a woman, not only morally but conventionally unexceptionable, the right of petitioning a judge for occasional access to her own infant child; to say nothing of the deep under-current of suffering and of degradation, the mental powers frittered away and wasted, the hearts pining and broken, the characters impaired and lowered, and the influence misdirected that might have guided man to his best exertions and to his loftiest condition;—when we contemplate such facts as these, we can be at no loss to perceive in what direction there is ample

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space for improvement, nor how that improvement must be realised.

Whether by faculties identical in their nature and operation, or whether by qualities harmoniously arranged so that they are fitted for the giving and receiving of pure and high impulses, still it is evidently the intention of Providence that in the social relations that arise out of the diversity of sex, there should be a provision—a grand and enduring provision—for the exaltation of human nature and for the security of human happiness. Perhaps the training that seems most congenial with each nature is that which should be diligently employed upon the other: for the one, that mental discipline which may seem to have most affinity with the sterner constitution, in order to preserve it from weakness; and for the sterner nature, more of that cultivation which is generally appropriated to the gentle, in order to endow it with more kindness, and preserve it from hardness and coarseness. Thus will Education advance the time, through all appropriate legal and social changes, when mutually adapted qualities shall act and react for the highest production of mutual good. There seems to lurk a latent promise in the mournful conclusion of the work of our great poet. After that first and fatal disobedience which constitutes the burden of his epic song, when recrimination had exhausted itself, when terror and repentance had subsided, the exiles from Paradise, partners in sin and suffering, stood outside the portals now barred against them, and

> "The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
> They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way"—

in that symbolic grasp retaining an emblem of the love which should work redemption, make the wilderness and the solitary place be glad for them, the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose, and eventually lead humanity onwards to a paradise far richer and more enduring than that which was in the beginning planted for its possession.

National Education implies economical, civil, and political adjuncts of considerable extent. A great mass of privation, suffering, physical disease, and mental and moral

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degradation, now exists, which might be removed, and which would be removed, by the diffusion of greater intelligence amongst the population generally. Poor as may be the remuneration for toil, paltry as may be the pittance which is earned by the workmen from day to day, still there can be no doubt, and all who have observed the habits of the poorer classes agree in the fact, that their limited resources run deplorably to waste; that even without any greater means, their houses might be more cleanly, commodious, and healthy; food might be provided of better quality and partaken of in a more nutritive condition; much that goes in the profits of the distributors of different articles might remain in the pockets of those who buy; and by economy, prudence, knowledge, and coöperation, there might be a very large advancement made in the physical comfort and enjoyments of almost all above the rank of the most necessitous. This, therefore, would be likely to follow to some extent; and whenever such a course of improvement is going on, the powers of legislation are sure to be invoked in aid of its general efficiency. There are circumstances which would prevent a higher degree of prudence, or any kind of coöperation in those who toil, from altogether removing these evils, because the locality of their occupation in some degree confines them as to the locality of their dwelling; and more is made by the proprietors of the soil putting up wretched and unwholesome hovels for their accommodation within certain districts, than could be realised by providing dwellings which are at all fit for the reception of human beings. The application of legal enactment has done a little in mitigating the evil, but little indeed in comparison with what might be accomplished by the systematic direction of its powers to this purpose.

Another concomitant of education would be that of raising the condition of the labouring class, by the destruction of all monopoly, for it always subsists only upon ignorance, and upon gross and narrow views of class interest. No distant result, perhaps even an accompaniment proceeding step by step, would be the abolition of all those robberies upon time and labour and real property which come under the head of monopoly, from the monstrous tax upon man's daily bread to his exclusion from any particular

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kind of toil by which he could best earn his daily bread. There are those who assert for themselves a monopoly of occupations, and whose conduct differs little from theirs who secure to themselves the profits of a monopoly of food. Both go on the same principle. The whole thing is a great blunder—a colossal blunder. Almost every man sees the advantage of a free interchange of all productions in relation to other articles than those in the production of which he is himself directly interested, and of a free course for labour in its application to any business or handicraft but his own; the error is detected on all hands as to others; but such is the effect of an immediate prospect of interest, that there are comparatively few who discern and admit it as to the sphere of their own operation. I would say to all, whatever their station,—be you peer and landlord, or be you journeyman printer or carpenter,—you who tax the bread of your fellow-creatures, and you who stand in their way and say, You shall not earn your bread by this occupation—it is the exclusive right of me and my colleagues—I would say to all of you alike, you do a deed of darkness; you are clinging to that which deceives you, and which leads you to the commission of wrong; you are endeavouring to perpetuate what must be destroyed as intelligence advances, what must give way, not merely before moral principle, not merely before feelings of justice and benevolence, but before the test of any thing like an enlightened self-interest; you both invade the property of labour—for to exercise his skill and his strength in whatever way he can, and to have the bread which he earns, these are the property of him who labours; your blind and narrow selfishness is a wrong to him, a robbery on society, and a blasphemy against Providence and nature.

A certain concomitant of education would be the establishment of justice—equal, impartial, universal justice—law operating alike on all classes alike, not by identity of penalty, but by the power of proportioned penalty to restrain with like influence in all cases from the commission of offences. Justice cannot be equal while the laws are so expensive in their application as to operate at once as an absolute prohibition from appeal to them upon all whose income is below a certain amount. Justice cannot be equally administered while magistrates are irresponsible,

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at least comparatively irresponsible, connected with a class, and with all the modes of habit and feeling, with the ignorance, the prejudices, and the sinister interests of that class; nor while punishment is so often inflicted in the way of penalty, nominally the same in amount, but which to the poor man may be long incarceration or absolute ruin, while to the wealthy man it amounts just to the trouble of signing his name to a check. An acute and veteran observer of society, and one of our ablest commentators on passing events, has emphatically declared that, "in this country, a rich man must be a fool if he suffer himself to be much troubled by the legal consequences of any crime short of murder."

The feeling of equality and independence, the sturdy and manly sentiment that must be generated by National Education, would breed a race that would not endure this state of things. Such irregularities might at first be only covertly repealed by opinion; they would become too obnoxious to continue; and at length they must give way in form, and present us with valid and acknowledged legislation resting on the broad principles of equal and universal justice.

Nor is it merely the power of opinion over legislation that would content a generally educated nation. It would seek further; and claim security by its own possession of direct influence upon legislation. The desire for political rights has found its way in the world; it beats strong in millions of bosoms; it would be strengthened rather than weakened by the diffusion of education. And whatever different classes may think and feel—whatever apprehensions may associate themselves with certain forms of political authority and legislation—I think we may discern that in the advance of education it must come also as a fact, that there would be that extension of political right in which no individual would be excluded from his proper position and voice as a member of the community. I do not see how such a process can stop short of the result, that, though exclusion from political existence, though disfranchisement, may be employed as a punishment, only for the purposes of punishment could it possibly continue to exist as to any whose years had reached that period of maturity which is held to qualify them to act for themselves in

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matters of private interest. I am not now advocating a theory of the suffrage; I am not asserting a political doctrine; I am simply indicating a fact which, if National Education is to be established, must I think obviously and necessarily, in no long course of time, be realised.

Perhaps it may be said that there is much of mere speculation in this. I think it will not appear so if the mode in which I have endeavoured to work out the primary idea of these lectures be seriously considered. To a certain extent, many of these results have already realised themselves wherever a National Education has been established. I have in my hand an interesting and trusty work, containing a great deal of valuable information as to the condition of the working classes in different parts of the Continent—Mr. Symons's book on *Arts and Artisans*. The portion I am about to read relates to Switzerland, where the school system has been carried, probably, to its greatest extent; and I shall read to you rather a long extract, because the whole of it is a clear and simple statement of facts, and of facts bearing directly upon the anticipations in which I have been indulging:

"The Swiss are notoriously the most educated of all nations. Though each canton has somewhat different laws for enforcing education, I believe all, without exception, punish the ignorance of children as a crime on the part of the parents. The usual mode of enforcing education is thus: the gemeindamann (or local mayor) of the parish, finding children uneducated at eight years of age, warns the parents twice to send them to school. This neglected, he informs the stadtholder (prefect), who orders the land-yager (or local constable) to fine them heavily; and, if need be, to take the children to school. The fine is so heavy, and is so rigorously inflicted, that the offence seldom occurs.

"I visited, among others, an excellent school in the canton of Appenzel. The system of teaching does not essentially differ from that followed in the generality of the 'British schools' in this country; but as a pattern of cleanliness and happiness to the children, that of Appenzel surpasses all I saw in Switzerland.

"Boys and girls are not wholly separated, and they receive their lessons indiscriminately together. M. Zell-

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weguer, who I believe founded this school, informed me, that though some doubts were at first entertained as to this system, it has answered admirably; the intellectual superiority of the boys acting favourably as a stimulus to the emulation of the girls, and the milder manners of the latter softening the roughness of the boys. A separate house is appropriated to each sex to live in; the girls, however, performing all the household service in both houses.

"I was told that, though of both sexes there are children of fourteen years old, it is a rare occurrence that any attachments are formed there, or that young men marry young women both of whom were together at school. The feeling generated seems that of brother and sister, and so remains in maturer years.

"I observed that, in most of the schools, the children of rich and poor were indiscriminately mixed; nevertheless, in no country can a more pleasing deference be observed on the part of the working classes towards those placed in more fortunate circumstances. This is most observable in the country districts, where a kindly feeling is reciprocal between employer and employed which I have never witnessed elsewhere. A person to whom I was referred for information, on the borders of the lake of Zug, accompanied me to some houses of the artisan-peasants he told me he employed. In every house, without one exception, the man or his wife, whichever happened to receive us, held out their hands, first to him and then to me, and again shook hands on parting. Their manner was quite in accordance with this; and the shaking hands was evidently not a mere form, but the prompting of real feeling. My conductor proved to be the employer of a thousand silk-looms! I could not help contrasting this with the state of feeling between those placed in a similar relation in Scotland or Lancashire!

"In Zürich, a botanical garden has recently been planted, containing many valuable plants, on ground which originally formed some of the outworks of the fortifications of the town. I found it, to my surprise, not only open to the public, but not even surrounded by any fence or railing. Nevertheless, the plants were wholly uninjured, and were left there in perfect confidence that the

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public would respect them. The railings were in preparation, but when they are erected the garden will be left open. I am afraid that a botanical collection equally exposed in England would scarcely meet with the same respect; and that the botanists of England would not be hazardous enough to intrust equally valuable plants without fence or guardian.

"I will state a fact communicated to me by M. Zellweguer, as illustrating at once the prudence and prosperity of the Swiss peasantry.

"A few months ago, during a high wind, the most windward house in the village of Heiten (Appenzel) took fire; the houses were all of wood, and in a few hours the entire village was burnt to the ground. The loss of property was estimated at 400,000 florins; and as the place was occupied almost entirely by the labouring classes, a liberal subscription was immediately raised for the relief of the sufferers. When the distributors of the charity tendered the proffered aid, to their great surprise they found but 140 individuals, not half the population, who required any relief, the rest having been received by their various relatives into their houses; an assistance which, added to the savings of the sufferers, enabled them to dispense wholly with the bounty of their neighbours.

"The Swiss are constant in their attendance at places of public worship, and are in all points regarding general morality superior to any other community. The austere discipline of Calvin, and the rigorous religious training he imparted to the Swiss people, have incarnated the national character, and go far to account for the industry, as well as the moral rectitude, so eminently possessed by them.

"Population is very nearly stationary in Switzerland. Thus, three elements combine in rendering the Swiss people preëminently prosperous. First, every man produces what he has most capacity to produce, freely exchanging it with what he most wants from other countries. Secondly, every body is a producer, there being no idle class. Thirdly, there are fewer children. Production is extended to its utmost limits; mouths are restricted to the smallest number. If I was asked why the Swiss have had the wisdom to devise, and the power to effect, so excellent

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an organisation of prosperity, I should answer, by their democratical institutions.

* * * * *

"In the democratic cantons of Switzerland, the people not merely govern, but govern without representatives; they make laws around the fountains in the market-places. The prosperous state of Switzerland is perhaps the strongest possible and practical proof—first, of the high order of popular intelligence; and, secondly, where that intelligence exists, of the perfection of democratic government."—pp. 108-113.

These results, it may be said, are accomplished on a very small scale, and furnish no precedent for a large empire. But Nature and Providence have impelled men towards aggregating in large communities; to form them is the impulse and tendency of our social being. It would be strange for this to prove a deteriorating power, a provision which can be found nowhere else, a natural provision for ignorance and vice and misery. One would not readily believe this: and if in large states there be ampler play for many of the springs of mischief and depravity, in large states also there is an ampler development, a far more than proportionate development, of all the causes of prosperity and progression, of all that can operate towards exciting the intellect, expanding the affections, raising the character, developing the faculties of man individually and socially, and accomplishing an amount of good altogether unattainable by any small community. Education has greater means and appliances, it has greater resources. If it have stronger difficulties to contend with, it has immensely higher powers by which to conquer those difficulties, in consequence of the largeness of a state, and of the mutual relations and influences of the different classes of which it is composed.

Education, then, comes not alone. In its train comes Wisdom, looking before and after, tracing causes, and applying means to ends; Genius, exulting in the multitudinous appreciation of the wonders of art and poetry; Prudence, setting the house in order, not for death but for life, not for mourning but for rejoicing; and Love, blessing that house and filling it with enjoyment; Independence, "lord of the lion heart and eagle eye;" and Freedom,

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multiplying its blessings with a universality unknown in those ancient states where its name was most enthusiastically worshiped. Religion hovers over all, and points to them as its own; hovers over them like the descending dove upon the head of Christ, emblem of the outpouring of the spirit of God, making men apostles and saviours, and teaching them to speak in new language truths of universal and everlasting import.

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No. V.

[*A recapitulation of the preceding Lectures is omitted here, as not necessary for the reader.*]

CHURCH REFORM would inevitably be a result of National Education. It could not be that the change in thought and feeling produced by the instruction of all classes of the community would leave such an ecclesiastical corporation as the Church of England intact, and precisely in its present condition. Nobody supposes this, the Church itself least of all. The Church proclaims itself in danger, as it has often proclaimed heretofore. In fact, the Church of England has been continually in danger from nearly the commencement of its existence; and it is curious to mark the character of the events by which the peril has been created. The Church was in danger from the Revolution of 1688, which delivered this country from the impending prospect of Popery and arbitrary power, and commenced a new constitutional era, of which toleration was the characteristic. The Church was in danger by the accession of the House of Hanover, which averted the fears of those who saw the tendency of the predominant policy in the latter portion of Queen Anne's reign, and which was therefore a relief to all right-minded men. The Church was in danger from the American Revolution, which, originating in resistance to taxation without representation, advanced to the assertion of political independence, and gave the first grand impulse to the progress of society in modern times. Then the Church was again in danger from Wesley and Whitfield, because they enlightened the poor and ignorant classes throughout our country, who had so long been abandoned by their regular and legal instructors to the worst vices of ignorance and grossness. They went forth in the spirit of the primitive missionaries. No scene was too wild, no set of people were too rough and dangerous, for them to grapple with; their words came from their own hearts, and went to the hearts of others; whatever

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fanaticism might mingle in their efforts, they raised the lower classes of this country; and by this aid to humanity, by this application of the power of Christianity to the good of man and the glory to God from those whom they almost made his rational creatures, they again endangered the Church of England. The Church was very much in danger from the French Revolution, which might and did lead to the commission of many horrible and sanguinary excesses, but still which was in substance, and which will be to future ages, the proclamation of man's fraternity, of equal rights and equal laws, and of the necessity of fashioning systems of government more in correspondence with the wants and intelligence of the age than those which we derive from feudal institutions. Then the Church of England was in danger from Lancasterian Schools, and the admission to them of children of all religious denominations; and the rival system of Bell was dragged from the oblivion into which it had fallen, rather as a weapon of defence than as a means of improvement spontaneously adopted. And afterwards the Church was subjected to the imminent danger of the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Emancipation of Roman Catholics; measures tending to enlarge the boundaries of civil and religious liberty, to make a profession of religion no longer a badge of degradation, and to remove a sectarian exclusion from those political rights which should belong to all the members of a free community. After all these diversified perils, from causes which promote the freedom, security, and well-being of mankind, the Church of England is again in danger from the prospect of a National Education.

But nobody pretends, at least with any show of reason, that religion, that true and everlasting Christianity, can be in danger from instruction. Nobody who believes the declaration of Christ, that his church is founded on a rock, can imagine that the rock must needs give way and let it fall to ruins should a schoolroom be built at its base. It is not the Christianity which the Church may claim to have in common with other churches,—it is not the religion of which it professes to be the guardian, in common with all the wise and good throughout the world,—that can be in danger, but something that is peculiar, something that belongs to it as the Church—the Church of England

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—something inherent in it as an ecclesiastical corporation. Such is, by implication at least, its own confession when it talks of danger. And the Church is right: it cannot remain unchanged while this great work is going on; the most superficial contemplation of it may show us that it must be modified by the increase of intelligence. What a huge mass it stands in the centre of society! In every one of the ten thousand parishes throughout the country it has its temple. It has a priesthood rising through all gradations, from the poor curate who in his work and his pay takes rank with the day-labourer, to the prelate whose emoluments and dignity place him amongst princes. It has establishments of education, universities the most amply endowed in Europe, and more abundant in all their resources, if they did but employ them, for the promotion of learning. It has its courts of law and its code of law, voluminous enactments, with the judiciary array for their enforcement. It has its place in the legislature of the country, its distinct and recognised position, and often its commanding influence there. It has a volume, a whole volume, of forms, and creeds, and prayers, and articles, comprehending many hundred, perhaps many thousand, propositions, many of them very disputable propositions, such as have taxed the wits of the most laborious and ingenious theological inquirers, but all declared true by act of parliament; and it inherits the tenth part of the produce of the land, besides other properties of large amount, constituting it beyond all comparison the wealthiest ecclesiastical corporation in Christendom. Can such a body as this, in all its diversified relations and influences, possibly remain unchanged?

Nor is it difficult to see the points at which the Established Church and an educated people must come into collision; in which, consequently, the Church must give way; and which, therefore, indicate the kind and degree of Church reform that may be anticipated, when regarded simply as the concomitant of National Education.

The first of these is the fixity of its forms. The inevitable result of education is to promote individuality; to stimulate the powers of thought into more energetic operation; and consequently, where numbers are concerned, in the first instance at least, to multiply diversity of opinions. The Church assumes that even in these days it can teach

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implicitly. Its clergy boast, as to the question of National Education, that they stand on higher ground than the Dissenters; that they make no appeal to the judgments of their pupils; they call for no logical investigation, for no assent which is to be the result of argument; but they come with the Bible and the Prayer-book, and demand implicit reception, unquestioning faith, in what they inculcate. This will not do as National Education advances. The Church itself finds that. In our own days, it has accommodated itself largely in its teachings to the doctrinal opinions of the majority of religious people. The dogmas habitually taught in the Church now are not what they were half a century ago; they are of a different caste, they have advanced many degrees closer towards the common dogmas of those who are called Evangelical Dissenters. But it is not by concessions of this kind, it is not by counting votes on questions of theological dogma, that invariable forms of religious expression can ever be reconciled with the mental tendencies of an educated people; for still there is the lack of mental liberty, still there is the want of that full and free scope for individual thought, which yet may perfectly consist with social harmony in acts of worship. There must be so much, at least, of yielding in the forms of the Church, whatever their age, whatever the attachment of their zealous, not to say bigoted, adherents, as will make the Church a better temple of religious liberty, not merely than it now is, but than any dissenting body now is; because what is done from reverence to antique form in one case is done for the sake of upholding peculiar opinions in the other, both classes thus combining in their institutions to prevent that which God has made the tendency of human nature—the disposition to claim the free right of thought and speech on the most important and the highest subjects on which thought and speech can be exercised. Here, therefore, in the enlargement of its boundaries, in the throwing down of mental restrictions, in the common use of the many advantages it possesses of social accommodation for worship and instruction, must the Church find its first great reform.

An educated people would make so felt that it must be heeded, its dissatisfaction with the aristocratical character of Church patronage; with making the function of moral

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teaching and the cure of souls a part of the family portion of the children of wealthy houses; with the total separation of either the quantity or quality of the work achieved from the extent of the remuneration bestowed; and, in fact, with the whole of those arrangements which relate to the selection of persons to fill the different offices; with the power to which they are responsible, and with the distribution of the revenues that are to be divided amongst them. An educated people will claim that there should be some relation between capacity and function; that those who are put into the position of teachers should have some aptness to teach; that he who is set over a parish as its pastor, its spiritual guide and shepherd, should be characterised by sympathy with those under his charge, be prone to the outpouring of friendly consolation, and possess the other qualities required for this species of social guidance; and that those who are made bishops or overseers, who take charge of the general direction of those who teach and guide the people, should have the appropriate fitness for their work, the kind of intelligence, acquirement, and ability which will render them really the best directors of others and the guiders of their exertions, so as to produce the largest amount of instruction and benefit to the community. Towards this change must the diffusion of National Education tend.

I cannot reckon the destruction of the national reservation of the tenth of the land or of its produce among the probable results of National Education, because I think an enlightened people will look at the abuse of such a reservation, and correct that abuse, but will regard the fact itself, that one-tenth of the land is kept out of private possession, in order to be a public fund for the purposes of intellectual and spiritual culture, as one of the best inheritances to which any nation can succeed. This property, which is really the endowment, not merely of dogmatic theology, as taught by the Church of England, but of all the teaching power, of all the intellectual efficiency, in the country, is in most danger from the class which most influences legislation. Its first and great danger is from the proprietary of the soil, who look not with well-pleased eyes on the separation of so large a portion of the land or its produce from the privilege of private occupation and property, and who,

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in the tithe bills lately passed, have shown this disposition by carving out for themselves a very handsome percentage of that which was the public property, a landlord's appropriation clause, from that which they profess to hold most sacred when the competition is not between public and private property, but between the monopoly of the fund by an ecclesiastical corporation, and an appropriation to its legitimate purposes of public instruction. Its next danger, but much more remote, would be from a democracy so unthinking as not to regard the blessings which may be thus wrought out to our country. Were the entire tenth, the reserved tenth, of the produce of the land of England to be taken possession of at once, and thrown into the great swamp of the national debt, it would only be buried there, and the country would have lost the advantage which might suffice for the instruction of generations yet to come, for the training of the young, the exercise of the mature, the consolation of the old,—a rich provision for universal intellectual and moral culture.

Another point in which the tendencies of an educated nation would come into collision with the existing Church would be the technicality and formality of its ministrations; it would require of the Church more comprehensiveness in its topics of instruction, and more stimulus in their treatment. Dogmatic theology, preceptive morality,—these constitute at present, with the exception of the occasional tirades of Dissenters against the Church, and of the Church against Dissenters, the substance of what is termed religious teaching. But is this all that an instructed people would require? Does this evince any thing of the spirit of those old Hebrew teachers whose names are so venerated, and whose productions furnish in single texts the themes which modern preachers profess to illustrate and apply? If we look to our Bible, we find the prophets of the old dispensation going through the whole circle of knowledge as knowledge then existed; adverting to all the relations of their country, its external political relations, and its domestic policy; applying general principles to the duties of the time, teaching the history of their race, its deliverances and its conflicts; employing every variety of expression that was within their reach—the lyric ode, the dramatic poem, the pastoral story, eloquent declama-

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tion in its most fervid forms: and religious establishments, entering into the spirit of the scriptures, would do the like in our days. It is the only way in which religion can be practical. The means are the same now as then. There is nothing on the face of the earth so unpractical as a modern practical sermon. When does it teach men the duties which our state of society has called into existence, duties unknown to the Hebrews of old, but affecting the conduct of every man in the community? When does it excite the mind, and enable it to form a moral judgment on the literature of the day, or the events of the day? When does it show religion pervading the knowledge of God's works, as the spirit of God pervades those works themselves, through all their manifestations and in all their diversity? Without this, can religion be brought home and made practical? In combining these with a sound moral philosophy, taught by laying the broad foundation of its principles, and wrought out by applying those principles to all the diversities of our existing relations, there would be something like practical discoursing; and for this we must wait till the wants of an educated people make themselves felt by a national church,—a church which will only retain its national character by ministering to the supply of those wants.

By thus expanding itself according to the real spirit of religion, and in proportion to the demands of the age,—demands that would be enlarged and strengthened by National Education,—the church would undergo reform rather than destruction; sectarianism would lose, not altogether its existence, perhaps, but much of its formidableness to human peace and enjoyment; and there would be at least an approximation towards the restoration of that identity of character in church and state which has never existed since the minds of men were altogether blind and submissive, but which, as it may apparently exist in a state where only the few think, may really and best exist in a state where all think. And the work thus achieved would not merely be the reform of the church—it would be the renovation of religion; it would raise men's conception of religion, exalt it in their apprehension above form and externality, and whatever is merely technical; they would imbibe it as a spirit animating their lives, and feel that

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National Education had accomplished a grander work than the Protestant Reformation. Luther did not achieve so much, and this would not need a Luther; it would need no heroic and confessorial determination, no spirit of martyrdom going forth to do battle with the world, and to perish, if needful, in the conflict. It would be done by the common tendencies of common thought and feeling; it would be the achievement of a greater than Luther,—of the genius of the human race, the mightiest and most peaceful of all reformers.

National Education, if we have rightly viewed it, is not something strange and alien, abruptly introduced; it is not merely the remedy for some violent disease in society that must be stopped, or we perish; it is not an invented measure of reform to accomplish a desired change; it is not merely a charity for the poor, or a defence for the rich,—but a link in the great providential chain; a needful and inevitable step in the march of the human race; a process that must take place according to the common law of human progress; and is as sure of being realised as the various other phenomena that characterise the records of the past, and exhibit the order and government of the world. And it is pleasant to contemplate it in this point of view, to be assured that it belongs to the plan of which we are all a portion,—which includes the past, the present, and the future, and is, in fact, His working who doeth all things according to the counsel of his own will.

And now to look at it practically, where are we? After ages of amply endowed public schools; after nearly a century of Sunday-schools; after almost half a century of Bell and Lancaster; twenty years after discussions by the legislature of an extensive scheme of National Education; after plans have been devised by persons of all classes, by practical men and speculative men, by clergymen and laymen, by senators and by working men; after the experience of foreign countries—of Prussia, and Switzerland, and Holland, and France; and after varied endeavours in our own,—where, I say, are we? Still only on the threshold; but we are on the threshold. A commencement has been made. If one plan has been baffled by the dogged hostility of sectarian bigotry, established and non-established, another has succeeded, which, though scarcely carried by legislative

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forms, yet does something, for it provides for the letting in of light on systems now actually pursued; it promises to tell how schools are managed if they receive the public money; and in that alone we have a resource against much of the imposition and pretension that have been the substitutes for, and the prevention of, real education; in that we have some prospect of improved methods and wider extension. There is yet more in the general direction of attention to the subject, the working of thinking minds of every class in ceaseless discussion; in the growing boldness of the desire for National Education; in the growing shame of antagonism towards it, that seeks to shelter itself under every variety of plausible pretext; and in the extent to which the notion of National Education has been sown in the public mind, where it cannot but take root, and spring up to bear its fruit in the fulness of time.

It may be thought that in developing, as I have endeavoured to do most plainly in these lectures, the real character of National Education,—its bearing, its needful adjuncts, and consequences,—that I have little served it as a cause; that much may have tended to excite alarm in those who were hesitating; that much may furnish a handle for those who are, on different pretences, opposing all real National Education; that much may have been prematurely put before the public. I confess I am little solicitous about such objections. I take it, the best service which I can render to any good cause is in simply telling out my own notion of the matter; and if I cannot serve a good cause in that way, I am very sure that I should not serve it by accommodation, by partial statements, or by a spirit of advocacy. Nor do I attach much importance to the hostility that continues to be manifested, convinced as I am that man's aspirations are God's promises; that the national mind cannot be fixed vainly on a great national good; that in proportion as the subject is really comprehended and desired, all opposing power must crumble into dust before the expression of that desire. I am much more solicitous so to excite attention to the subject as that National Education, in all the loftiness and extent of the idea, should be distinctly understood and appreciated, than I am for the adoption of any temporary and partial measure, working out its minimum of good, but doing comparatively little towards the renovation

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of religion and the exaltation of the human race, through national character.

As the thoughts of reflecting men enter fully into the conception of National Education, and as they become its teachers, there is a previous education going on by that very process, in and by those who most influence the more extended instruction of others. And in this way, through the agency of human intelligence, does Providence work. That Providence whose agency is incorporate in the rising and the setting stars, in the rushing winds and the tides of ocean; which descends from the clouds in fertilising showers, and springs up from the earth in the living sap of vegetable being,—that Providence has its noblest vehicle of prophecy and power in the confiding intelligence that relies on its progressive plan. In humanity's advancement, the phase we designate National Education is coming; as plainly coming as it is plain that Popery and feudalism are gone. Antagonistic interests and prejudices there are, but with as much permanent result as if there were a sinister interest in the prolongation of the season of winter. It might do something, indeed, that sinister interest; it might dam up the rivers, and say, Here are the wintry floods still spreading over the country; it might strip the young leaf-buds from the tree, and declare that the boughs were waving in wintry bareness; and for the snowdrop and the crocus, it might trample them in the soil, their wintry grave, and scornfully forbid their resurrection;—nevertheless the spring WOULD come, and so will come whatever of good the providential plan of God includes and ordains for humanity.

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ON THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

LECTURE I.

The Religious Ideas: their Universality.

All religions are constructed of the same materials. They are all developments of the same germs: the developments varied and modified by the influence of circumstances. But still the diversities of religions are upon the surface; and, as we penetrate deeper, an approach to identity is always perceptible. Whatever may be their names or their pretensions; whether they are enshrined in creeds and sacred books, or exist only in the legends of the poet or of the multitude; whether they were promulgated by legislators, when society itself was framed, by some monarch-priest dictating the spiritual as well as the temporal law, or only preached by some hermit or self-ordained peasant, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," or in the streets; whether they bear upon them the stamp of Oriental enthusiasm, or of the calmness and severity of European intelligence; whether they hold their solemnities amid the pomp of courts, or seek the darkness and the security of the cavern, or worship in some humble barn; whether their worship be one of strict simplicity, or call to its aid all the resources of all the arts; still religions, however diversified, are the same in their essentials. They are manifestations of the same ideas; they are formed from the same elements. As all buildings, from the cottage to the palace, or the enduring pyramid, are constructed with a few materials—wood, stone, metals, &c.; or as the letters of the alphabet, by their combinations, form all we can express in record and oratory, in poetry and science; or as, from time to time, we find how few are the elements that in their different states and combinations produce all the phenomena of this material world,—so are a few simple ideas the source, the essence, the elements, and the power of all religions.

Yes, they are few and simple,—revelation, God, provi-

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dence, the sense of right and wrong, duty, redemption, heaven,—these, and such as these, are the primeval elements of religion. They are the Religious Ideas. My purpose is to deliver a succession of lectures on these, the religious ideas, separately considered, but pursuing a similar course with them, which I shall indicate on the present occasion.

These are the conceptions which we find in the most intellectual forms of religion, in the most dissenting Dissent, and the most protesting Protestantism; we find them in the strongest assertion of individual judgment in matters of faith, and we find them also in the most implicit submission which the devout believer in the Roman-Catholic system renders to the guide of his conscience—his priest, who is his mediator. We find them in all forms of Christianity, and we find them in that Judaism which originated Christianity. We may trace them in the fierce mythology of the Goths and in the graceful mythology of the Greeks. We behold them in the multitudinous idolatry of the Hindoo and in the stern monotheism of the Mahometan. We find them in the different forms which each religion has assumed under differing circumstances; and we may go back till we behold them shadowed out in the remote and gigantic forms of primeval Egyptian superstition. They are in all; although, diversified by various influences, they form different and hostile religions, seeking for the conversion of one another, mutually excommunicating, and influencing by their conflicts the rise and fall of empires.

As we trace these—the religious ideas—in succession, I think it will appear that they have a deeper foundation than the mere ceremonies, the creeds, the books, the priesthood, the teachers, the oracles, by which religions are distinguished, and from which they are called. I think we shall find that they have their root in human nature; that they are the growth of man's intellectual and moral constitution; that they are in their essence a reality, as much as he is a reality. I do not call them innate ideas; that doctrine of innate ideas has been exploded from the days of Locke. We are not born with thoughts, but we are born with tendencies to thought, and to certain modes and forms of thought, which afterwards take a definite existence. For though Locke exploded the doctrine of innate ideas,

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his comparison of the mind of man to a sheet of blank paper fails egregiously. There are some things which cannot be written upon that paper by any hands; and there are symbols of ideas which will appear upon it, although no hand be excited to trace them there, which, under the appropriate influences, will come out, like the writing on paper with sympathetic ink when it is held to the fire, and will grow plain and legible even to untutored tribes. There are tendencies to modes of thought, such as what philosophers mean by "the moral sense;" not a power born with us, like the physical and external senses, but such a constitution as that, in due time, the conceptions of right and wrong, of good and evil, of duty, will arise in the mind and exist there to a certain extent, though that extent may be diversified by the acquirements and the exercise of the faculties of the individual. The assumption that such tendencies are physically manifested is the foundation of phrenology, and is a correct conception in itself, whether the phrenology which is thus founded be true or false, complete or incomplete, accurate or inaccurate, in its deductions. Whether there be or be not in the head an organ of veneration, the tendency of man's being is to venerate; and this tendency will discover or create for itself an object. Veneration seeks the majestic: it will delineate and believe in the majestic. It has a tendency towards this; and although it may be often wrong, and may be corrected by logic and philosophy, by experience and observation, yet this is only saying the very same thing that we have to say of the physical and external senses. Our sight and hearing are corrected by the operations of our mind, and by the deductions of knowledge and experience. And as the testimony of these senses yet carries with it the assurance that leads to belief in the external existence of objects, so is there in the intimations of the internal senses, in the objective tendencies of our different faculties—veneration, love, hope, fear, and so on—so is there in these an assurance that leads to a belief also in the objective and external existence of corresponding realities. There is in human nature an internal impulse towards the divine. Hence religion,—but religion modified in a thousand different ways, and by a thousand different influences; most extensively modified by the claimants of revelation—by the

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utterers and expounders, whatever the testimonials of their authority, of what they call divine oracles—by those who speak in the name of the Lord, or in the name of the multiplicity of gods whom their people worship—by those who have left the impress of their individuality on religions that have prevailed over islands and continents and the broadest empires, and who have exercised authority upon large portions of the human race, and through the lapse of long ages. They have all been modifiers, and no more, of these internal universal conceptions of human nature, without which to work upon, priests, kings, prophets, or reformers, would vainly have endeavoured to establish their systems. But in this work of modification they have sometimes played most fantastic tricks, opposing the legitimate influence of the growth of knowledge and science upon conceptions dictated by our own constitution,—physical, intellectual, and moral. They have given to certain names and ceremonies, certain outward and physical expressions, a factitious sanctity. By making consecrated ground of some spots, they have desecrated the rest of God's earth. They have given names to the Deity, "Allah" or "Jehovah;" they have endeavoured to define the Infinite; they have sought to give a strict outline, an external embodiment, to that which is only susceptible of an internal and spiritual existence. Many religions, partaking of the historical character, have exalted into importance the commemoration of different events—natural or preternatural, real, fictitious, or exaggerated, and so on—which they have raised to the dignity of that moral truth which is essentially different from, and above, mere historical truth. By these varied agencies—by the establishment of different classes of teachers—by the power of different priesthoods—they have thus very often, while differing from one another, plunged also into a much more important difference from man's first, natural, original instincts—the instincts of his own moral sense, of his own spiritual nature and tendencies—which are a surer guide than any external authority. In like manner, the power of governments, their peculiar characters—despotic or republican, the influence of climate; these have their effects very legibly written upon the religion of different countries. Different races of mankind,—for assuredly a very striking diversity of race

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may be traced,—that too has its effect, disposing some to one form and some to another. Consequently, even in the religions which seem the best founded, there has been change—continuous change. Literature and science have wrought their work upon them. No Church claiming a continuity of miraculous powers can stand against any thing like freedom of discussion and open thought, and a literature which bears the impress of those qualities. And in the Christianity of the present day, what modifications have not been enforced by the power of successive discoveries in astronomy and geology! Religions succeed to one another, or a religion preserving the same name becomes a different thing. Scepticism, as to all, has its room and ground of triumph; but even in that gloomy triumph there is a latent conviction of something which really belongs to nature, and therefore belongs to eternity. There is a remarkable instance of this sort of latent conviction in an exceedingly well-known passage. I mean the sceptical stanzas which occur in Lord Byron's *Childe Harold*, suggested by the ruins of Athens:

"Son of the morning, rise, approach you here;
Come, but molest not yon defenceless urn;
Look on this spot—a nation's sepulchre—
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
Even gods must yield, religions take their turn;
'Twas Jove's—'tis Mahomet's; and other creeds
Will rise with other years; till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built on reeds!"

And then, in the intended continuation of this same scornful vein, how a protest of humanity beams out:

"Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven!"

The same powers, the same influences, that did bind man to earth, have taught him also to lift his eye to heaven. It is the peculiarity of his condition, that, being so bound, his senses and his thoughts do not grovel with his position; that in the various influences that have made him what he is, that have planted him on this globe, and rendered it alike his cradle and his grave, the scene of all his exertions and the limitation of his knowledge, there is still, together with this, the universal result, confessed by the poet of

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scepticism, even when most sceptical, perhaps unconsciously, that,

"Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven:"

and so he will lift it.

There are yet other modifications than those introduced by the founders of religions—prophets and priests and kings—the tendencies of governments and of social condition. There are other influences besides these,—the powers of nature around us as well as in us, which modify these modifying influences themselves; which tend to keep man true to his first, simple, original thought; which very often, in their power upon him, bringing out different forms of devotion, show the universal identity of devotion; which, while they cast on religion the shadows of gloomy regions, or excite to aspiration by the altitude of mountains; while they colour man's piety with all their own hues, whatever they may be, giving to all the song of birds as the lyrical music of worship, and the eternal roar of the ocean as its profound anthem, do yet in all bear testimony to the identity of the sentiments whose expression is so infinitely varied. The Unitarian preachers of England stood astonished at the translations made by Rammohun Roy, the Brahmin, from those ancient Hindoo books, the Veds. "The gospels themselves," said Mr. Belsham, "teach not a purer monotheism than do the sacred writings of the Hindoos." The prayer of Epictetus, what character has it to distinguish it from a Christian prayer? Is it not a form of devotion which the sincerest believer of the present day may adopt as the expression of his own desires, wants, and wishes, and his reliance upon Divine wisdom? The language of the "Divine Dialogues" of Plato harmonises with the mystic spirituality of modern times. Pope was abundantly justified in his "Universal Prayer." That the "Father of all" has been "in every age" adored "by saint, by savage, and by sage," is a fact which we are compelled to recognise; and the red man of the woods talks of the "Infinite Spirit" in language which the European philosopher admires for its truth and its sublimity.

There is, then, a religion of humanity, of which perchance we may gain some glimpses as in succession the

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religious ideas are made to pass before us. There is a religion of humanity, though not enshrined in creeds and articles, though it is not to be read merely in sacred books,—and yet it may be read in all, whenever they have any thing in them of truth and moral beauty;—a religion of humanity, more ancient than the oldest superstitions, more divine than the best-attested oracles, more enduring than the faith which seems to be the most firmly established in the world;—a religion of humanity, which goes deeper than all, because it belongs to the essentials of our moral and intellectual constitution, and not to mere external accidents; the proof of which is not in historical argument or metaphysical deduction, but in our own conscience and consciousness;—a religion of humanity, which unites and blends all other religions, and makes one the men whose hearts are sincere, and whose characters are true and good and harmonious, whatever may be the deductions of their minds, or their external profession;—a religion of humanity, which cannot perish in the overthrow of altars or the fall of temples, which survives them all, and which, were every defined form of religion obliterated from the face of the world, would recreate religion as the spring recreates the fruits and flowers of the soil, bidding it bloom again in beauty, bear again its rich fruits of utility, and fashion for itself such forms and modes of expression as may best agree with the progressive condition of mankind.

Strange changes have of late been rife in the world. There has been a season of confusion and of destruction, and of the struggling forms of new social arrangement, like Milton's "tawny lion," half imbedded in the soil, and "pawing to get free." Thrones and principalities and powers have been shaken. They have reminded us of the bold simile in the Apocalypse, where the stars of heaven are said to fall "as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind." Revolution has succeeded revolution. The authors have followed the objects. Those hurled from power by convulsions have been speedily succeeded in their exile by the authors and leaders of those convulsive movements; and throughout the earth men's minds have seemed involved in a chaotic condition. There has been universal turmoil; and those peaceful influences by which man generally feels that he treads his path in

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safety, which give their assurance to commercial enterprise and industrial undertaking,—these, too, have been strangely warped and interrupted; and throughout the earth there have been scenes of change in rapid and astounding succession. And well it is, amid all this, in the very time of chaos, to look onward in confiding reliance on the harmonious operation and results of the system by which hitherto humanity has been conducted. Well it is to look from the evanishing to the lasting, and to feel assured that as, in all change and vicissitude, there is no safety but in holding fast by the great, the enduring principles of our moral being—wisdom, virtue, truth, justice—so, in the turmoil of our thoughts, it is well to rest on that which is enduring, and keep steadily before us what cannot be overwhelmed by revolutions, but will abide the shock of all convulsions. Let us do the duties of our position, whatever they may be; and happy are those who, what the hand findeth to do, do it with their might; yet happier if, while achieving the peculiar business of the day, while working the work of time, they do it with "thoughts that wander through eternity," and repose upon the Infinite.

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LECTURE II.

The Religious Ideas: their Objective Reality.

First: All religions are constructed from the same materials; and, however varied they appear when only superficially considered, are, as to their essentials, compounded of certain thoughts or conceptions, which, in these lectures, I term the Religious Ideas,—such as revelation, God, providence, and so on. Secondly, these religious ideas, although perhaps we cannot technically term them innate ideas, are yet so prevalent as to show themselves the genuine result of the human faculties, of the moral and intellectual constitution of man, however modified and obscured by the claims of those who pretend to peculiar revelation, by different forms of religious establishments, or by the dogmas of different teachers. And thirdly, that they are so—that they maintain their existence and their power even beneath the superincumbent weight of a pile of superstitions and incongruities—shows that, however much we may be warranted in doubting, disregarding, or rejecting many forms of religion, still religion itself is a reality, a permanent and enduring reality. These three propositions are what I endeavoured to illustrate in the last lecture, as introductory to a series of discourses on the Religious Ideas; and it seems to me that, before proceeding to consider these ideas separately, I may yet further prolong my introductory remarks by amplifying somewhat more the third, and the most likely to be disputed of these assertions, namely, that because these ideas are consonant with human nature—the common growth of human nature—they therefore point to religion as in itself a reality, however it may be misrepresented, or blended with what seems falsehood to men's perceptions.

And this is an important result to arrive at. It is surely something—knowing how much there is of mere invention, of superstition, of ignorant fancy, in what is called religion—it is something to know that there is more than this in

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it, and elements of a very different character and tendency. Religion is not a dream, it is not mere cloud-scenery, it is not a vain and evanescent imagination. Such delusions have prevailed, they have overshadowed nations and ages, but they have passed away—because they were no more than dreams—before the rising sun of knowledge. Religion has not so passed away. It is something to arrive at the conclusion that religion is not a fraud, a deception. Deliberate and gross deceptions have no doubt often been practised in its name. Claims and professions have been set up utterly devoid of all grounds; there have been seasons when—as we are told of Rome—augur could not meet augur without laughing in each other's faces; but these times have never long endured; they have come in the corruptions of states, and have passed away with the corruptions of states. They are exceptional in human history,—the world were else one great lie, and, what is much more extraordinary, that very falsehood would be the stimulus to the noblest aspirations, a source of comfort in the deepest and darkest sorrows, and the impulse of the most devoted heroism.

It is something to arrive at the conclusion that religion —being neither fancy nor fraud—is not either to be classed with mere historical legend. The historical forms which it has often assumed are very unimportant as to its essence. All historical legend is full of prodigy, has large masses of falsehood intermixed with truth, requires the application of a close and searching criticism to distinguish the one from the other; its wonders fade away with the lapse of ages, becoming more and more incredible. Religion is not to be mixed with this; it is moral truth, resting on moral proof, and cannot fade or waste away. Nor is it a mere chance. We cannot say that religion came upon earth—as some say America was peopled—by accident. It is there as the flowers are there which grow on the soil; it is there as the stars are in the heavens, shining in their perennial brightness; it is there by the ordination of that omnipotent Nature from which all result. It grows as they grow; it blossoms in the heart as surely as do those flowers upon the soil; it ripens in the character as surely as do the fruits of harvest in the fields. It belongs to nature, it belongs to humanity. This is the position I am endeavouring to

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illustrate. And as there is continual confusion from requiring an inappropriate kind of evidence, especially on religious topics, it may perhaps be useful to remind a certain class of reasoners that logical forms are not essential to satisfactory conclusions; that as, in the history of invention, the greatest discoveries have not been made by working out a process of demonstrative thought, so there are truths which will not yield themselves to the common forms and arrangements in which the logician delights, and in which very often he mistakes the means for the end, —the dexterous use of his own implements for the value of the result at which he professes to arrive.

There are instances of common convictions—firm ones, too—which you cannot put to proof in a logical form. There is our reliance on the permanency of the laws of nature. One of the ablest reasoners, and with no bias towards Christianity or any particular form of religion in his mind, has found himself unable to account for this reliance but by terming it a human instinct, something analogous to the instincts of animals. That the sun rose to-day is no logical proof that the sun will rise to-morrow. That the grain grew last year does not argue, by syllogistic deduction, that the grain will grow next year. And yet where is there a confidence stronger than this? Where is a belief more firm? We rest on this, while there is much that, with all its array of professed demonstration, would fail of commanding our credence, still more our confidence. Our conviction of the reality of external nature is another instance of the same description. That, too, baffles the logician. You cannot show that there is matter, or existence at all, beyond yourself; and yet you believe it, rely upon it, act upon it. It may all be only impression on our consciousness. The Berkeleian can dispose of the whole material universe in this way with the greatest ease. There may be no stars shining in heaven, no trees growing in the forest—all may be but sensation, thought, in us; still, who does not rest upon, who does not act upon, the reality of something which is out of us with an assurance as strong as that of our belief in our own existence? Those who require direct agencies of demonstration in such matters as these—who contend that belief and the logical forms of proof have an inseparable union—must find their way out

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of this dilemma as well as they can; and how far they will find their way in real knowledge, and that which relates to the business of life, it is difficult to say. It must be left to themselves.

Now, I think this association of the religious ideas in the human mind with their being representatives of actual realities, is countenanced by the fact, that all our faculties are objective. All our faculties have relation to something out of ourselves, which something is a reality. Whether we analyse man phrenologically, and take his organs as they are mapped out upon the skull, or whether we resolve the faculties into associated ideas, according to the philosophical doctrines of Hartley,—still the argument which I propose in this case holds just the same. On both theories human faculties are objective; they relate to existence beyond ourselves, to real existence. The eye has its relation to light, and the ear to those vibrations of the atmosphere which we call sound. Human feelings and tendencies have all their external relations; love and mutual need build up society. Our tendency to enjoy regular intervals, and the repeated occurrence of certain movements, cherishes music. Every quality which we seek to cultivate has this relation—a relation which the phrenologists, such as Combe, have largely traced—between what is within us and something which is without us. Are we, then, to suppose that this holds only of the lower faculties? that the higher are exceptional to this law of objectivity? Are we to suppose that objects of sight are provided for the eye—that that organ has every thing which corresponds with its functions; that sounds are provided for the ear; that there are objects for every tendency, even of cupidity or destructiveness—that all the inferior faculties have their corresponding objects without; but that such faculties as veneration, wonder, hope, conscientiousness—which all philosophers alike place at the very highest elevation of our mental constitution—are alone unprovided for; have nothing which corresponds to them; but fail of indicating, as all the inferior faculties indicate, actual and external being? Through the whole range of faculties, beginning with the very lowest, this objective relation obtains. It holds true of the common bodily senses; of the various animal propensities which link

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humanity with inferior natures; of the intellectual powers, framed for exercise in so many spheres of existence; and it cannot be supposed to cease just when we reach the noblest class of tendencies. The moral faculties of man require the reality of the religious ideas.

Further, the affinity of religion with human nature is observable in this, that both human nature and religion are results of the same influences and agencies. They are portions of the same system; the power which provides for the one provides for the other also.

The system in which we live is full of these harmonies; they beset us around; we find them every where. The hero of an age, the great man who is to stamp his intellectual portraiture upon the pages of history, who is to give his name to an era, who is to make revolutions in the concerns of humanity, in sciences, arts, arms, religions, or governments,—he is prepared for by a thousand previous contrivances, leading us back through long ages: for him other heroes have fought and conquered, or endured; for him historians have recorded the rise and fall of states; for him the poet has felt the burning glow of inspiration; for him have artists put forth their varied powers; for him did time and circumstance conspire,—the material with the spiritual, the unconscious with the human, the heavens with the earth; these all uniting, and combining their diversified influences, produce, just at that time, just that combination of faculties, powers, tendencies, and aspirations which makes him the hero of his age, which gives him his preëminence, and through him forms and fashions the destinies of humanity. There is this provision in all things; in those harmonies of external nature which become the inspiration of the poet or of the musician; in those diversities and arrangements of colour which beam their rainbow light upon the painter's eye, and give him the enthusiasm of his art. We find them even in reference to what is most material and mechanical. Long and countless ages ago mighty forests were whelmed by the floods; they changed their qualities beneath the superincumbent pressure, and were formed into those mines of coal which minister to steam, the great material agency of civilisation in our time. This production has been the result of processes continued through periods too

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vast for our arithmetic; but comes at last into its proper combination, and renders to humanity its unparalleled service.

As these are parts of one great plan; as we see the same power which provided habitations for humanity causing man to arise therein, and take possession of his abode; as there is the framework of nature, through all its different gradations, giving food to bird and beast, and arranging according to their several properties the climates to which they are indigenous, and where they find their nutriment, and whence they spread their numbers,—so there is the same kind of harmony, the same kind of uniformity, in the productive power, with regard to religion. That, too, is thus provided for from the first dawn of human intelligence; it is thus ministered unto, sometimes by the ignorant and erring, and sometimes by the enlightened and wise; sometimes by force and fraud, and at others by persuasion and example; but still it springs up, and grows on the earth: it is part and parcel of humanity itself. The power which makes man, makes religion; the power which sustains man, sustains religion; the power which multiplies humanity till it subdues the earth, renders religion universal. We resolve both into the same source; and as we trace in them the common products of one system of causation, we are led to pronounce the one a reality as much as the other.

All imaginative creations, all conceptions of the mind which are congruous with the ascertained laws of nature, are indicative of reality. The public taste even more and more requires this congruousness in fictitious creations. Nobody believes now in "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders;" the anatomical laws and principles are too well understood. We become impatient of allegory, because allegory requires in its creations qualities to be blended together which do not exist together in fact, either in the nature of animals or in the human mind. In ignorant times, conceptions are free from the restrictions imposed by the discovery of scientific laws. Those which are at variance with such laws gradually subside, are exploded, and disappear; whilst those which remain, remain because they are in harmony with the reality, and are indicative of reality. Take, for instance, the finest characters in Shakespeare; who can doubt that they do exist,

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or have existed? We may not know them; the poet might not know them himself; they may have borne or may bear other names; they may live in different countries or ages from those to which he has assigned them; they may not yet have come into existence; but of those characters we may safely assert that they are of real existence, that they have existed, or that they shall exist; for the mere conception of them is a pledge that amongst the boundless modifications continually going on in the production of actual human character, prototypes of these have, and have had, and will have, their place. They have internal evidence of a corresponding actual external existence; the metaphysician reasons upon them as if literally historical. So it is with those religious conceptions which, not fading away with the progress of knowledge, have become clearer and brighter as the mind of man was more expanded. That notion which is itself the source and yet the summit of all—the conception of Deity, the loftiest thought of man's ideality, which, produced so early—disfigured, it may be, by savage ignorance, or perverted by abstruse and fanciful doctrines, —still, that notion ever clears and brightens itself in the human mind, and seems even an independent existence there, enlarging and raising the humanity by whose faculties the perception is produced. The thought of Deity is a proof of Deity. And so powerful are these natural ideas, these religious ideas, in humanity, that no system of faith and worship, however strong its external recommendations to support, has ever proved powerful enough to keep them down. Look at the polytheism of antiquity, how firmly it was established; look at its prevalence among the wandering Arabs of a comparatively late period; look at the gross idolatries of those old Israelites; yet they did not suppress the tendency of the human mind to think of the Divinity as ONE; and monotheism was proclaimed first by Moses, and then by Mahomet, and humanity heard and reverenced the proclamation. It was the same in Greece; Greece patronised the polytheistic system,—Greece, with all the beauty and sublimity of its mythology,—Athens, where it was said that it was easier to find a god than a man; and yet even there, in spite of establishments, in spite of policy, in spite of popular opinion, and in spite of martyrdom, did Socrates arrive at and inculcate the same monotheism

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which holds its power in the minds of Hindoo Brahmins, which even teaches the savages in their fetich idolatry something of a Universal Principle, an Infinite Spirit. It is the religious idea congruous with human nature—the produce of human nature; and you cannot keep it down.

The future state is another of these ideas. The Mosaic institutes were founded either in ignorance or intentional disregard of the expectation of a future life. It was ignored by Moses; it had no place in the inscriptions on the tables of stone lodged in the sanctuary; there was no future in the book of the law; the people were not instructed therein; their teachers did not surround it with authority; their oracles and their miracles alike had regard to the transactions of this life—to a retribution here; and yet, in spite of all this, the notion of a future life would come, did come, and, with the slight exception of a small and comparatively irreligious sect, prevailed over the whole people.

And so it is, whenever the dictates of that moral sense, which I class amongst the religious ideas, are violated by the professed enactments of religion. The right of self-defence, for instance, is one of the dictates of that moral sense; it is too strong for doctrines and precepts, for creeds and articles. A man's Bible may say to him, "When thy right cheek is smitten, turn thy left;" but generally and permanently he will not do that, whatever may be his faith in, or reverence for, his Bible. He evades it; he finds some mode of interpreting it which takes his case out of the law. If he does not relinquish the authority which teaches it, he explains away, and endeavours himself to escape from that authority. One of the Thirty-nine Articles of our Church of England is meant to prevent the simple and literal adoption of such a text as that; and condemns those who hold it not lawful, on certain occasions, or under certain circumstances, to bear arms. The instinct of self-defence and self-preservation, harmonising with the moral sense of humanity—with one of the religious ideas which grow in our mental and spiritual being—is too strong for precept, however allowedly divine, and however direct and explicit in its enactments. It is the same with the doctrine of total depravity, and vindictive and eternal torment. It becomes a conventionalism; it is explained away; casuists and teachers devise different means of escaping from such a

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punishment for all about whom they are interested. The heart revolts from it; and forms and creeds cannot enforce it. And thus it ever is, when the religious ideas are invaded. There is no sanctity of books, however infallible they may be deemed; there is no power of miracles, though they were wrought before one's own eyes, instead of being merely the legendary record of long-past ages; there is no authority or persuasion of teachers; there is no force of establishments,—that can prevail against such notions: they baffle them all, they outlive them all; they stand unshaken, whilst creeds and forms totter and fall; they maintain their identity with human nature, the enduring; with the world, the permanent; with God, the everlasting.

There are, then, presumptions of various kinds which still lead us to this association of thoughts. Certain conceptions are native to man; they are indicative of real existence; they point us towards religion as something which, however it may be disfigured by arts and devices, still retains its own certainty of being—will revive wherever humanity revives—will show itself in affinity with our nature, our highest nature, wherever that nature has most opportunities of development, and, if the different modes and forms that now constitute religion were all to pass away, would replace them with natural and appropriate expressions, by which they would still maintain their influence, diffuse their consolations, and excite the aspiring hopes of humanity.

I dismiss these introductory remarks by merely adding, that it is not with the ignorance of man, but with his knowledge, that these thoughts have an affinity; they are associated with progress. Real and essential religion has a harmony with our condition, of which the external forms imposed upon it for various purposes are generally destitute. They seek to fix some mode as the enduring standard of faith and excellence; they say to the human mind, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." They are thus at variance with humanity, just in the same degree and to the same extent as they are untrue to religion. But if religion really belongs to ourselves; if we may in its genuine spirit look abroad and recognise its reality, though in forms most alien from our own convictions and our own feelings; if we may see it purifying and exalting even those whom we deem

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the victims of idolatry and superstition; if we can trace it amidst some of the darkest clouds that have brooded over human thought; and, at the same time, if we find it in the closest affinity with whatever is purest and brightest; why, then it is something destined to endure—it is a reality—it is beyond ourselves; and in our conceptions of it we are exalted as it were to a higher mode of perception and of enjoyment; we trace in it, and along with it, a tendency to progress, which is the noblest item in the charter of the privileges of human nature—which belongs to us in our affinity with Heaven—which raises us towards higher grades of being—which infuses into us a spirit of oneness with that Power who rules every where, and is still educing good from evil, and making good more vast and more lasting. Let us rejoice in such a view of religion, which calls upon us for no base submission to that at which "reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded;" but appeals only to our best powers, is in harmony with our brightest prospects, and tends to make man worthy of the position that he occupies on earth, and not unworthy of having in him a principle of enduring life, for which yet ampler spheres and nobler occupations and enjoyments are provided.

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LECTURE III.

Revelation.

Religion and Revelation are twin thoughts: wherever we find the one, we find the other also. All religions claim to be or to contain revelations. It is not improbable that they all make the claim with some degree of truth; but if so, the exclusive claim of any must fall to the ground. In this country we are accustomed to identify revelation with Christianity. When we speak of revealed religion, as distinguished from that of nature, we mean what is contained in the Old and New Testaments. We indulge in that common fallacy by which people assume that their own notions are the truth, that their own institutions are the wisest form of government, that their own religion is the only religion, and that their circle is the world. But if we look abroad, we find a similar disposition in a great variety of directions. The Koran much more distinctly claims to be, in its entirety, a revelation than the Bible. The Koran does not mix up, as the Bible does, history, poetry, argument, and a great variety of the forms of communication between man and man. It is one long appeal of Deity to his creatures. It is a Divine monologue: the prophet is merely the amanuensis. God speaks, and Mahomet writes. Other religions have similar pretensions. Where is there one which does not rest on the notion, or that does not at least include the notion, of a revelation? The institutes of Menu come with similar claims of authority to the institutes of Moses. Zoroaster taught divine things, having arrived at them by divine knowledge. Odin sought Hela for the solution of mysteries. The Grand Lama of Thibet is a living revelation, continually renewed. And the idolatry of the old classical times abounded in oracles. They came from trees and caverns, from rivers and mountains; the priestess uttered them on the tripod, and "still her speech was song." The craving after revelation makes

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man believe almost any pretender to the rank of priest or prophet. Strange methods have been devised to obtain revelations: corpses have been exhumed—they have been, it is said, reanimated—that they might tell the fate of ensuing battles. The flight of birds has been watched, the entrails of animals have been dissected, in order thereby to arrive at some intimation from the gods. It was done by the augurs of Rome; it was done by the patriarch Abraham when he sacrificed—for the Jews had recourse to these methods as well as other people. Even the glittering of a stone has been sometimes made the medium of an oracle. The Urim and Thummim, the breast-plate of the high-priest, with its jewels, shone or was darkened according to the favourable or unfavourable answer of Divinity. Even those who have advocated a natural religion, as opposed to all preternatural revelation, have clung to the same belief or practices. Socrates had his attendant demon, for monition, warning, and encouragement; and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, seeking a sanction for the publication of his work against Christianity, knelt down and prayed, and heard the affirmative response of Heaven's thunder in an unclouded sky!

Revelation, then, is eminently entitled to be classed amongst what, for the purpose of these lectures, I have called the religious ideas. It has an intimate association with the very notion of religion itself. And why is this, but that for religious principle, guidance, and support, there is a general want and craving in humanity? and there is a persuasion as general, that for every want there is a supply in the arrangements of nature or of Providence. Man finds this by experience in his inferior wants and cravings. He needs sustenance; the fields bear him their fruits. His eye requires light, and it beams around him, and becomes the medium of his perceptions. His ear has the want of sound, and sound comes to him borne on the waves of the atmosphere. And if it be true that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing," it is that in our very senses there is something of that tendency which distinguishes the higher faculties and the general constitution of humanity; and, therefore, that dissatisfaction is the mode by which nature stimulates art, in order to provide yet higher gratifications—with them higher

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wants—and so again, in a progression which nature and art are yet very far indeed from having exhausted.

The different races of mankind are found in the localities best adapted to their peculiarities of temperament. The very beasts of the field vary in different regions, and are sure to seek for the region best adapted to them. Where their appropriate habitation is, where their natural food grows, where their different powers can be best exerted, there they are, as in their natural seat, their original nest, —from which, indeed, they may be moved to other regions, but where we find, as it were, the fountain of their existence. The craving mind of man seeks after the knowledge of the qualities and properties of things and of past ages; and here again, in the natural progress of society, arise the means of meeting this want, and filling his mind with acquirements in which he becomes possessed of the supplies of all ages; and perceiving this, he is led to infer, that for other wants, belonging to a different set of faculties, there must also be a provision. For the religious wants are at least as obvious as any other. They are, wherever humanity exists. Where it is, there is darkness to be dispelled, exertion to be made, sorrow to be borne; there are all the different actions and influences which, in their operation upon our frame, make us conscious how much we need of that highest kind of knowledge, of that strongest form of consolation and support. How soon is man doomed to be perplexed in his spirit, to be compelled painfully to say of himself, that he does not know, that he cannot penetrate the darkness around him! How often has man to endure a calamity that presses heavily upon him, when sympathy fails him, when his own resources fail him, except as in those resources he finds the suggestion to look beyond and to look above! Who is there that has not been perplexed like David at "beholding the prosperity of the wicked"? Who is there that has not felt the sense of injustice keen and strong at his heart, in the view of man's oppressions over his brother-man? Who is there to whom the grave has not covered up hopes and affections, and made the mind long—painfully and intensely long—for some discerning power,—that is, for some revelation? There have been books published under the name of "Inquirer." "Inquirer" is the name of humanity. Man every

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where is naturally seeking, grasping, groping after something which is to support, to guide, to strengthen, and to impel him onward.

As yet, religions in their peculiar and distinctive forms have generally failed of satisfying this want. The religions of the old civilised world have passed away—vanished from the earth; or they remain only in the glorious works of art which they have produced, looked at with other eyes, with the admiration of taste, but not with the homage of worship. By no power can those ancient faiths be revived. What religion has thoroughly satisfied the craving mind and heart of man? Christianity has had eighteen centuries; and where, for two-thirds of that period, has been its extension? Mahometanism reigns over a larger number of the human race; and yet what enlightened mind is satisfied with the attributes of "Allah," or with the trees and fountains of the paradise of the Koran? No religion has so appealed in its entirety to the common human heart as to become the religion of human nature; and yet they have all had ample time for doing so, had it been in them. As to Christians, they have taken of late rather to split than to multiply; to divide rather than to extend. They cannot convert one another, and hence there is little chance of their converting the Hindoos or other heathen. Man is yet seeking for something of a different kind from any religion considered in its technicality, its entirety, and its exclusiveness. They have all paltered with humanity; they have all professed to give more than the human mind found they actually realised. The light which they shed abroad has been found frequently to "lead astray," and could not be recognised as "light from heaven." They have not given the abundant satisfaction after which our nature is still striving, and after which it will continue to strive, though in its fulness it may be found unattainable. They have not raised the veil of Isis, or, if they have, only to discover that there was no great truth beneath to show to the nations. They have baffled the inquiries of mankind, as the young Epictetus, in his studies, was baffled by his tutor, who expounded to him Hesiod's *Theogony*, and told him that,

"Eldest of beings, Chaos first arose."

"And Chaos, whence?" said the young inquirer. Poets

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and theologians, he was told, had no answer for that; he must go to the philosophers. And what could they achieve? The greatest oracle of Greece, that of the far-seeing Apollo, was solicited to designate the wisest of men. It named Socrates: and the philosopher's account of his own wisdom was, that he knew only that he knew nothing. The world has been left unsatisfied.

We are accustomed to say, in familiar language,—some sects,—that the Bible *is* a revelation; others, aiming at a nicer distinction, that it *contains* a revelation. There is a sense in which both these are true; but it is not the sense in which they are commonly affirmed. Indeed, few books bear less of the character of claiming in their entirety to be a revelation than the Jewish and Christian scriptures. One of the best condensed descriptions of them was given by Edmund Burke, in the discussion on the clerical petitioners, who, about a century ago, had claimed relief from subscription to articles.

"The scripture," he says, "is no one summary of doctrines regularly digested, in which a man could not mistake his way; it is a most venerable, but most multifarious, collection of the records of the divine economy; a collection of an infinite variety of cosmogony, theology, history, prophecy, psalmody, morality, apologue, allegory, legislation, ethics, carried through different books, by different authors, at different ages, for different ends and purposes. It is necessary to sort out what is intended for example, what only as narrative; what to be understood literally, what figuratively; where one precept is to be controlled and modified by another; what is used directly, and what only as an argument *ad hominem*; what is temporary, and what of perpetual obligation; what appropriated to one state and to one set of men, and what the general duty of all Christians."

Such was the true and just description given by that illustrious man. What was his inference from it?—That the scriptures needed the addition of the creeds and articles of the Church, in order to fix their meaning. And what was this, but to make the Church the revealer, and not the scripture,—to raise the agent above the author,—and, by this authority of interpretation, to make another effort, but a much vainer one, towards the object commonly ascribed to the scriptures.

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What, indeed, is there on which we can lay our finger, and say, "Here is a truth, in some distinct preternatural form, communicated from heaven to earth"? The very being of Deity is taken for granted in the whole of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. When did men learn that God was their father? We cannot tell when the thought first occurred; it is most prevalent in the New Testament, but we find it in the Old Testament. The Jew exclaims, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" We find it in the prophets, and we find it also in the ancient poets of Greece and Rome, as well as in the speculations of the Oriental Monotheists. The notion of Deity grows before our eyes in the history of the human mind; at first imperfect, confused, partaking of the material forms of humanity, surrounded by attributes that belong rather to the warrior than to the legislator, as afterwards rather with those that belong to the legislator than to the parent. We behold it every where growing with the growth of human nature, and enlarging with the extension of the human mind.

Was the future life a revealed doctrine, in this preternatural way? There is no text for it, no communication even by the greatest of the prophets; but the Jews picked it up in Babylon. Having found it there, though in the land of sorrow and captivity, it had so much affinity with their thoughts and feelings, that it speedily became the general faith of the nation. Is the doctrine of the devil a revelation? When, where, or how? The conception is only an attempt—an abortive attempt—at a solution of the great problem of the origin of evil. We see him taking varied forms,—some sublime, some ludicrous; passing through all gradations, from an obedient, though an accusing, spirit,—the attorney-general of heaven's court,—until he claims a coördinate throne with God, and maintains a universal struggle with his power for dominion over life and heart and soul. The idea of a divine preternatural revelation cannot be brought into contact with associations such as these. We must look elsewhere. We must look further.

Where is revelation? Every where; every where that man, cherishing his purest thoughts and highest faculties, finds his spirit in communion with the great universal

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Spirit. It is not here or there exclusively. It is with the poet of an idolatrous country; it is with sages arising in barbarous times, their light shining amidst the thick night of ignorance; and it is with those who, enjoying higher degrees of knowledge, surrounded by an atmosphere of intelligence, find their own minds enabled thereby to look yet higher, even to the great Source of light. Wherever moral and spiritual truth suggests itself to the mind, grows in that mind, passes from it to other minds,—there is revelation; by whatever name it may be called, under whatever external forms of religion it may be conveyed, with whatever establishments and institutions of priests or churches it may be associated,—revelation is there, and there should we thankfully acknowledge its existence.

There is a state of mind to which it comes—not preternaturally—there is no conjuration in the case, there is no violation of law; it comes in harmony with the great laws of matter, mind, spirit. When a man has meditated in solitude, or has discoursed in society,—if he has become familiar with antique volumes, or has listened to living teachers,—whenever and wherever he has felt himself most at one with the scheme of things in which he exists; when, his mind retiring from petty struggles and petty enjoyments, or seeking relief from its weight of sorrows, allowing the course of his thoughts to run freely, he has perceived, amid the great confusion of things, some moral truth, as it were, beaming from above,—there has been God's revelation; and let him lay it to his heart, and cherish it.

There is something analogous to this in science. It was by no logical process, by no calculation, that the theory of the universe first arose in the mind of Newton; at least, according to the story, the apple fell, and the thought sprang up,—how the power of gravitation might bind the planets into a system, and unite system with system, through all the regions of space. And thus it is that moral truth, in the minds of men disposed to be recipients of Heaven's bounty, has come to them in all countries and in all ages,—and will continue to come while nature and man exist as they are now constituted. It is true, thought works on these conceptions: it may supply some degree of external evidence, though it does not discover them; but after all, such is not the basis on which they rest. It may

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endeavour to hew them into a shape more accordant with the acknowledged principles of the time and the country; but this will not affect the essence of the thought itself, the discovery of the moral truth,—what I call the revelation. Bentham laboured all his life in merely amplifying a sentence which he found in the writings of Dr. Priestley—"that the proper end of government is the greatest happiness of the greatest number,"—a sentence probably written by that fluent author without himself having any distinct comprehension of the extent and grandeur of the meaning of that on which he thus conferred expression. Bentham, the most logical of men, spent his life in amplifying and applying this truth; but he never proved the assertion itself,—the basis of all his philosophy, the spirit and life of his whole system, that which to deny reduces all his juridical and social speculations to a mere hypothesis: he never did prove that—he never dreamt of proving it; and perhaps he might be unaware through his whole life that he was thus receiving a truth on the ground of its moral fitness and consonance with the best dictates of human nature, which had really nothing of the logical demonstration and foundation that he was endeavouring to give to all his minor propositions.

Such is the way we deal with things in this western world. The Orientals affect not the logical forms as we do; a thought darts into their minds, and they receive it as something from without,—something—if it bear marks of truth and beauty—from above. Hence inspiration is to the Orientals what logic is to the western world; they ascribe their thoughts directly to the great Source of thought. Religions have generally originated with them, and bear the oriental character. The East has been their cradle, though elsewhere they may have been cherished to maturity. But all that has been done for these elementary thoughts in morals and religion has been only to endeavour to systematise and arrange them, to give them logical forms which did not belong to them originally, and perhaps never can belong to them in the dawn where they were first produced. The revelations, then, which religions make are only modifications,—modifications of these thoughts; and I might have replied at once to this question of "Where is revelation?" by the words of William

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Penn, the Quaker, who, in his work entitled *Fruits of a Father's Love,* thus gives his conception of true religion: "That blessed principle, the eternal word, I began with to you; and which is that light, spirit, grace, and truth I have exhorted you to, in all its holy appearances and manifestations in yourselves, by which all things were at first made, and men enlightened to salvation. It is Pythagoras's great light and salt of ages; Anaxagoras's divine mind; Socrates' good spirit; Timæus's unbegotten principle, the Author of all light; Hieron's God in man; Plato's eternal, ineffable, and perfect principle of truth; Zeno's maker and father of all; and Plotin's root of the soul. These were some of those virtuous Gentiles commended by the apostle, that though they had not the law given them as the Jews had—those instrumental helps and advantages—yet, doing by nature the things contained in the law, they became a law unto themselves."

It is not in what is peculiar to them that religions are revealers, but in what is common to them with other religions. Generally, what they have as a peculiarity is something which will ill bear the test of time, as compared with what is essential. For instance, the doctrine of a future life is common to religions: the Christian apostles blended with it the resurrection of the body—a physical impossibility. Hindooism also teaches a future life, and blends with it the transmigration of the soul—a great improbability. The Greek philosophers had some notion of a future life, and they blended with it the preëxistence of the soul—a very questionable addition. But the hope itself, the anticipation, is common to them all. That is the revelation, the most important of the whole; it is the source of consolation and of guidance; it is what alone the soul can rest on, whilst all else, though peculiar, is disputable, and may pass away.

Religions have much in common, even of what we may deem their light and graceful ornament, as well as that which is essential to their substance. The circlet of glory that surrounds the head of Christ and of saints in our paintings first shed its rays from the heads of the old gods of Greece. "The mother and child," so worshiped over the European continent, you will find in the zodiac of the Egyptians. Humanity trampling on the serpent is an em-

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blem deriving the materials of its description not only from the book of Genesis, but you may see it in the pictorial illustrations of the Hindoo religion. And when "the cross" surmounts "the ball," and we behold the emblem of Christianity predominant over a world, we only repeat a form which may yet be seen in the tombs within the pyramids,—the symbol of that aspiration which has ever stimulated the efforts of men after immortality,—a sign that the good king or hero had become a divinity. There is similar identity in what has most importance,—in the truths which have the most relation to the mind and heart, the life and circumstances, of humanity.

Now, if this be really the state of things as to the different religions of the world, we no longer feel it a mystery that there should be characters the most eminent for piety, wisdom, beneficence, in all religions; and we see the arrogance of the presumption that claims alone to know the path to heaven, and of a benevolence that is degraded by the principles with which it is conjoined; that would convert other nations; that would call on all to tread in this path, and this alone; which tells them that we have saving truth, and they have only damning error; that our assertions must be admitted, or their souls cannot be saved; and which calls upon them to pass condemnation on all their ancestors—on all whom they have venerated—all whom they have loved—and to consider them all as one mass of corruption, destined to eternal burning; while, verily, we have the light—with us alone are its beams to be perceived, and from us alone must it go forth and irradiate the universe. It ill befits man, this sort of assumption—this claim of infallibility. It is quite certain this is no revelation from heaven; it bears no mark of divinity as to its truth, its spirit, or its mode of operation.

Revelation is not something out of law, or beyond law. It is not the petty wonder of a transformation of one substance into another that is really miraculous; but the enduring works of nature, renewed every night and morning, renewed every seed-time and harvest. Why stand amazed at a multitude fed with five loaves? Nature feeds man with as little material from year to year; her fields are enriched by Divine power, and nations eat and are satisfied. Throughout the world there are wonders ever adapted to

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excite our veneration, far more than all those contrivances, those fantastic wonders, that may for a time lay hold of our imagination, but, while they "play round the head," assuredly "come not near the heart." It is in the course of those influences which belong alike to all beings that man finds himself the subject of revealing power; that moral truth becomes clearer, brighter, lovelier, dearer to him; and whether it be enshrined in the words of a text, whether it take the pictorial form or that of sculptured thought, whether it come to him in written book or by tradition, it is ever welcome, so long as it bears these distinctive and exalted marks.

And this I take to be the true spirit of religion; alike free from enthusiasm or scepticism; treating respectfully the myths and legends that have associated themselves differently in different countries, but in all going to the heart and life of religion; free from the fervour of proselyting zeal, shrinking back from the denunciations of spiritual pride, abhorring lines of demarcation and exclusion between different portions of God's rational beings; turning from all these as things that can have no affinity with religion, any more than they have with genuine humanity; looking within for the source of thought and truth, by deep meditation on our own nature, as harmonised with the nature of things around us, and in these "seeing Him who is invisible," and perceiving, not only his existence, but his power and loveliness, his majesty and glory. We thus imbibe a universality of spirit akin to that which we behold in the entire system of Providence;—a universality of spirit like that of the ages which in the long succession of their march demonstrate that humanity is moving onward, and still onward, in civilisation and knowledge, science and religion;—a universality of spirit like to that which is manifested in human nature itself, in its diversity of races and religions, of climates and nations, all so varied, yet each with its peculiar type of goodness, power, and greatness, and all ministering to the common advancement and progress;—a universality of spirit akin to that of the earth, whose rich soil bears the frailest and loveliest flowers, and yet the enduring oak, and dark and eternal forests; which bears whatever can minister to animals, or to human beings; fashioning itself, as it were, into one great altar,

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on which man may present his offering to the supreme and directing Power;—a universality of spirit akin, not only to the ages, to human nature, to the earth, but to the heavens themselves—the boundless heavens, with their comets and planets, their suns and stars and constellations.

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LECTURE IV.

God.

The human ever believes in the Divine. The notion of Deity is as natural to man as that of humanity. Real atheism is an abnormal condition; it is out of the rule of human life and human feelings. It was said by an old divine, that a nickname was the hardest stone the devil could throw at a man. The imputation of atheism is the hardest of those hard stones; it is a mere calumny in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases at least out of a thousand. Often it is rather in words than in reality that the imputation has any basis; and perhaps scarcely an instance can be found of an intellectual life, the whole of which bears the mark of atheism. It is a phase, a variation, an exception, holding such proportion in the lives of those who avow themselves to be atheists as disease does to health in the ordinary routine of human affairs. Many are not atheists who profess themselves to be so, and believe themselves to be so. "Queen Mab" is not an atheistical poem, whatever Shelley might think or profess. It recognises that pervading spirit of love presiding over universal being which is only one phase of Theism—a peculiar phase, and certainly not amongst the least lovely. Exceptional cases prove nothing as to the human constitution; and however it may have occurred, in times of dreadful suffering or violent confusion, or in times of great luxury and wide-spreading and deep depravity of manners, that numbers have made profession of atheism, it has still been but an exceptional case in the history of nations, as it is in the history of individual life. That great logician and mathematician Hobbes would never believe that he had not accomplished the impossible problem of squaring the circle; and yet we bring this forward as no proof that mathematical demonstration is not irresistible. Recently, horror has been excited by the profit made of those burial societies established in some parts of our own country, where it seems the parents have trafficked in the lives of their

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infant children; and yet no one infers from this that the parental affection, the parental instinct, is not essential to the human constitution. To great and pervading principles instances like these offer little difficulty; and against such exceptions as these we have the otherwise universal voice of human nature. Civilisation and barbarism, science and ignorance, despotism and freedom, manners the most refined and the most uncultivated, ages of prosperity and of calamity, the inhabitants of regions the most remote, from the frigid to the torrid zone,—through all its varying phases humanity proclaims, "There is a God!" and renders that God its homage.

Revelation has been treated of as the first of those religious ideas to which these lectures relate, and the illustration of which I have proposed to myself. But revelation, though the first noticeable phenomenon of the human mind, yet implies at least a latent idea; revelation presupposes a revealer. This thought, this moral truth, which seems to beam and dart into man's mind as he is groping his way amongst the difficulties of his nature or his condition,—this new thought, recognised at once as an emanation of truth and loveliness,—whence emanates it? whence came it? It is a messenger; and who sent it? It is an agency; and who is the author? We cannot rest in such a notion as truth revealed to inquiring humanity, without the notion of a revealer. Different nations and different habits of thought may furnish different phraseology for the same phenomena; but this incoming of truth upon the human mind is really and essentially the idea of revelation, however much it may have been coupled with the childish adjuncts of inspired books and oracles. When the impulse came to Gibbon, in the ruins of the Coliseum, amid mouldering walls and deepening shadows,—when it blended with his recollections of grandeur passed away, and of its contrast with that other strange form of grandeur which had taken its place,—no voice, indeed, from the clouds or from the earth said audibly to him, "Go and write the history of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in sentences as gorgeous as the hues of that sunset by which it is typified;" but the impulse came,—came combinedly from without and from within; it was the sort of occurrence which, told in Oriental phraseology, would

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be, "The word of the Lord came to such a one, and said, Go thou, and do this great work." We have an unavoidable tendency, when truth thus comes upon us, to look at it as one link in a chain — a revelation, connecting the recipient with the revealer; and, accordingly, there have been many times and countries in which Wisdom itself was deified and worshiped. In the mythology of the Greeks, Minerva sprang full-armed from the head of Jove. In the book of Proverbs, Solomon has personified Wisdom as dwelling with the Eternal, as preceding all creation, and then, even then, rejoicing before its almighty Parent; as laying the foundations of the earth, and measuring the courses of the stars. And this, in the gospel of John, is varied by "the Word," which "in the beginning was with God, and was God," and that came and tabernacled amongst men; thus going as near as the genius of the Jewish and Christian systems admitted to that which the Gentiles have done in their personification and deification of Wisdom; and showing, in both cases, the tendency of the human mind to associate these thoughts together, and in the progress of truth to perceive an emanation from that great and eternal orb of truth to which they traced it back. In this way, the relation which man perceives in himself to wisdom, to nature, to some invisible suggestive power,— all make the revelation, the notion of revealed thought, essentially connected with that of a revealing power. Sometimes the mind may pause a while in intermediate agency,—"the guide, philosopher, and friend,"—the angel, the spirit of the departed, the local deity; the earthly prophet, the heavenly Logos, or "Word;" but these are only pauses. It never rests till it reposes in the thought of the ultimate and infinite Source of wisdom.

That which is done by the relation which revelation suggests, is also intimated by the other and varied relations of human nature with this same objective existence as to our faculties, with this same power as to phenomena around us and within us. We have been sometimes told that "Fear first made gods." Whether it be true literally or not, the apprehensiveness of danger, the feeling of pain inflicted from without, must suggest the notion of such a power. There must be something which thunders, strikes, blasts, destroys. That realises itself to man's

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mind; and, according to the grossness or the loftiness of his nature, he bows the knee in sordid apprehension or in enlightened reverence. Gratitude, the result of another of our relations, has a similar effect. We cannot receive good without thinking of a bestower of good; we cannot rest in the sense of bounties without some conception of a donor. The mind craves after it. That would be almost a miserable life which was spent in the continual reception of bounties from an unknown hand. Man would become restless and enfevered to find out the author. Gratitude demands expression, and enforces it. We must thank and bless somebody, or something, for the good of which we are the recipients. Thus gratitude, like fear, like the notion of revelation, still leads us to a God. The sense of beauty, the perception of power, the emotions that are excited in us by the grandeur and loveliness of natural objects,—these all again, as they possess themselves of the mind, and aggrandise themselves there, and give us new intellectual, which arise into new moral, perceptions,—these, again, make us inquire after the "first good, first perfect, and first fair."

The conscience within us has a relative character. Conscience accuses, approves, judges; but who does not feel, while before its tribunal, that conscience is but a delegated judge,—that this authority within us is but the type and symbol, is but the individual agency, of a more pervading authority? And as its voice is heard, whether in the loud thunder of reprobation, or in the gentle whisper of self-applause, still that voice also proclaims—proclaims in its every judgment—"Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth." Thus the varied relations that exist between us and the something exterior or unknown to us, but which all, in their different ways, still point to an object—an object of veneration, of love, and of confidence—are all the means of rendering the conception or idea of God natural and general to the human mind.

The progress of man has been commonly traced, as to theology, through the three forms of the Fetich divinities of the savage, the Polytheism of more refined countries, and the Monotheism which has become the religion of European nations. And as to the expression of opinion, the forms of worship, and the condition of the great mass, —at least, the surface of that condition,—there is truth in

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this gradation. It is what the historian of opinion must delineate, looking only to the apparent. But there is something more than this in human thought, even in its first faint struggling efforts.

The Fetich of the savage—the first object which the Indian sees after he has been made a warrior, and gained a substantive existence in the clan or tribe to which he belongs—which becomes a sacred symbol to him through life, and which he adores—does not this imply a previous thought, perception, idea, though latent? The notion of the divine must precede the notion of a divinity. Some recognition, therefore, of the universal principle, of pervading presence and power, blends itself even with the Fetichism of the savage; much more does it with the Polytheism of people more enlightened. The notion of God must precede the multiplication of divinities, of gods. We find the thought of a divine nature amongst the earliest of all in the speculations of poets and philosophers. It holds its way contemporaneously with all; and were we to imagine a solitary world,—solitary human life in the world,—a conscious and reflective being living perfectly alone,—no brethren, no animated inferiors,—sweep all away besides himself, except unconscious matter,—and still that individual would have the idea of life, and by it, in another state of things, he would recognise and identify the living being; and thus does the notion of the divine naturally precede the individual recognition of the particular divinity. God is before and above all gods. And although the different relations are intimately connected either with the suggestion or with the growth and expansion of this thought, yet there is an abstraction of it that inevitably occurs, and occurs, too, at a very early period. We arrive at the notion of a revealer, a punisher and rewarder, a benefactor, a judge; we thus strengthen our dawning notion of a God; but we withdraw it from these—we regard it in itself. The conception of Infinity is associated with it. It is something to be recognised apart from these relations, essential to us, but not essential to the Deity who has thus arisen upon our conceptions. The thought of God stands alone in the mind; and in so doing, it affects all other thoughts and all external contemplations. It is like the sun in the heavens—other things

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become visible in its light. What a wonderful conception it is when man becomes aware of this entrance, as it were, of an independent and commanding thought into his own mind! It is well described by the old Hebrew simile as "the coming of a king into the camp;" all are conscious of the presence, and render their homage. Every thought assumes a new relation; and as in the abstraction we have something in which every expansion of our own knowledge, every enrichment of our own thoughts, finds its appropriate object to invest with that aggrandisement and enrichment, so do we become more and more possessed with it, till the very action or operation of abstraction leads to that of universal identification; and by looking at God alone, man learns to see God in every thing.

It is the natural occurrence of these phases of the idea of Deity—of this succession of thoughts, emotions, or conceptions—which throws light on what to some has been a puzzling problem, namely, that of the antiquity of a pure and elevated Theism; for nothing can be more inconsistent either with the philosophy of the case or with the facts of the case than to assume that nations, even in the earliest periods, were at first, and naturally, all Polytheistic, and gradually advanced from that to Monotheism. The one is at least as ancient as the other; nay, it has been remarked, and often remarked with astonishment, by inquirers who have deeply penetrated into antiquity on that dark subject, the condition of primeval man, that we often find symptoms of a more distinct conception of divine grandeur and infinity than prevailed in later ages. Mr. Belsham and other theologians have endeavoured to account for this by supposing a primeval preternatural revelation, analogous to their views of the Jewish and Christian sacred books, that vanished from the earth,—whelmed in the deluge, perhaps,—and not a copy left for the scribe, or subsequently for the printer. That early revelation is better looked for in the source of all revelations, in that with which all revelations must be identified to be genuine—the moral constitution of human nature, the human mind and heart; for by the process to which I have just referred—the mental process of abstraction and identification—the idea of God, suggested by relations that may be called external, becomes an independent and self-expansive thought in the mind, and

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by it man attains at a very early period the notion of infinity and of eternity, both associated with that of God.

Then he has the impulse and inspiration of the grandest thoughts that can be poured forth. Who, with all the advantages of the Christian dispensation, and of modern times,—who surpasses, who approaches, Plato in his conceptions of Deity—conceptions arising in the midst of an idolatrous people, and in an age which, theologically at least, was one of comparative darkness? What can be more sublime than the language of some of the Old-Testament worship?—language uttered amongst a people whose hands were imbrued with the blood of their neighbours, who had possessed themselves of their neighbours' countries,—a fierce and warlike race, and seemingly incapable of any high degree of mental action, or of the mental refinement and expansiveness of other Orientals, even of the Persians for instance, to say nothing of the Grecian people. Yet there we find such descriptions as those familiar ones in the Psalms and the Prophets: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Again: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hades, behold thou art there. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me; yea, the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee!" This is language which will be appropriate in devotion while the world shall stand. The notion of infinity is not enlarged by the extension of scientific discovery. The psalmists knew nothing of the magnitude of the solar system; they knew nothing of the immense distances of the fixed stars. It never occurred to them that there were

> "Orbs whose light
> Has travelled the profound six thousand years"—

or it may be said sixty thousand—

> "Nor yet arrived in sight of mortal things."

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Their notion of the world was no more to that which science now delineates than the mole-hill to the mountain; and yet they poured forth strains of adoration which cannot be rendered more grand or exalted, which must remain the language of the most enlightened, who, with the greatest discoveries that science has made, or ever can make, bow their knees before the Infinite, and raise their voices to his glory. The language of science may become obsolete, the language of religion never. It is the expression of an idea natural to man; which, as soon as his nature gains the power of expression, gives it a being that lasts through all ages, all changes; and the song of the "sweet singer of Israel" may be the devout chant of those who, after myriads and myriads of ages, shall inhabit this world of ours, with a knowledge that has expanded in proportion to the periods which the human race will have enjoyed for its accumulation.

Of course, this original and natural conception is modified by a great variety of influences. I have glanced at these. I shall refer to them no further now than just to mention one way in which the history of thought, as traceable in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, illustrates the tendency of different national conditions, so that the one and selfsame conception of Divinity is varied according to the circumstances of the great mass of individuals,—varied superficially, while it remains the same essentially. We begin with the Israelites in their condition of subjugation, of enslavement, the beaten and starved vassals of Egyptian power,—the language of complaint their natural language, and the expression of their pervading feelings; a people who have almost forgotten that there is a God over man; who reject the gods, the temples, and the sacrifices of their oppressors, as well they may, or turn away from them with disgust; who have some remote tradition, of which the prophet and champion knows how to avail himself, of the God of their fathers, of the guiding Spirit that went with those mighty shepherd princes in their wanderings; and to this conception they turn. Here they make their appeal: their cry is for deliverance, for emancipation, for help—help in their down-trodden condition; and in this time of their dark and dire necessity, the first phase of Divinity which appears in their records is that of a De-

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liverer. God arises as their Saviour. It is a time of signs and prodigies; and no wonder that such should have been the first association of a barbarous and ignorant race so circumstanced. God works for them by wonders. The billows of the Red Sea roar the song of triumph over their insolent oppressors. The Law is given from Sinai's top, ratified by the pealing artillery of heaven, the trumpet of the Lord, the rolling thunder, beneath which the mountain shakes. They advance in their march; the river parts to make them a free passage, and the walls of towered and embattled cities fall down at their approach. It was a robbery, a robbery stained by sanguinary massacre, that conquest of Canaan; but the moral sense had not yet so developed itself as to check them in their career; and the notion of a delivering power, of Omnipotence as a delivering and emancipating power, occupied their thoughts, burst forth in what was true in their conceptions, and coloured their language and their records.

But they come to a more orderly condition. Moses dealt with them as it was well that a wise man should deal with such a horde of savages. With these rude and wild materials, he endeavoured to build the temple of order, of lawful authority; and the next phase in which Deity was mainly contemplated by them is that of the Legislator. The "Law of the Lord" becomes synonymous with the notions of revealed truth, and doctrine, and moral duty. All things are resolved into law; they have a religion of law; they worship by law; they live by law; they look for prosperity or adversity as the rewards or punishments which are the sanction of that law: it is the pervading thought, and throws its hue and colouring upon the other conceptions of the mind, and even, amongst the rest, on this most exalted one of Divinity. Miracles now abate; eventually they pass away with this perception of orderliness, and there is some glimpse of a law of nature as well as a law of ceremonies—some appearance of a law ruling over human spirits.

Then comes their military day, under their kings,—the warlike age of the Jews, now so notorious for their aversion to the military profession—their incapability, it almost seems, of adopting that mode of action,—but then so renowned for their martial deeds and prowess. Then,

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when they spake of Deity, "the Lord of Hosts was his name." Modern interpretation introduces the notion of the hosts of heaven, the orderly marshalling of the stars; but it is clear that no such thought was in the mind of the Jew. His Jehovah became a sort of Mars or Odin, the leader of armies, the god of battles, and the giver of victory. That phase endured for its time; and then another season of degradation—varied much from their Egyptian slavery, indeed, but perhaps still more depressing to their thoughts—arrived,—their vassalage to Rome, their hopeless struggle against the power that had subdued and that ruled the world; and their enforced submission, extending to so much in the relations and occupations of life, and ever and anon threatening even their religious observances. And then came the phase of supplication; the reliance upon pity in the Divinity; the plaintive, childlike cry that called on God as "Our Father;" then came those thoughts of mercy, and patience, and kindness, forbearance, and all long-suffering, which the woes and miseries of humanity have made but too enduring a form of the theological conception. They have, indeed, perpetuated it to our own times.

Not that even now this tendency to modification is exhausted, or that I am giving more than a single specimen of what may be traced in a thousand different ways in all the diversities of the history of religious opinion. There may be a tendency to a peculiar modification in our own times. There is a thought which would show itself yet more strongly, were it not checked and impeded by the influences which the constitution of creeds and churches, and the wide establishment of conventional theories of religion, interpose. But the tendency of our days is to universality, to the recognition of the universality of humanity; we belong to the times when negroes have been freed and Catholics emancipated, when the world has rung with a cry for the "rights of man," and shouts of "liberty, fraternity, and equality" have echoed from generation to generation and from country to country. Universal recognition as to our fellow-creatures has been a thought belonging especially to our own times, and magnifying itself in human opinion; and what is the modification which this effects on the great, the abstract, the enduring conception of Divinity, but that of universality, of a pervading power;

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not only of an impartial Providence over all human beings, of all countries and religions, but of an essence, a spirit, a soul of the universe, incorporate with all and in all, which manifests itself in every flower that blossoms, in every star that shines, in every cloud that flits across the sky, as well as in that everlasting arch which bends over all, and proclaims the Infinity coexisting with all these seeming and transitory modifications?

It is the work of religion to communicate this great thought, which shines through these different aspects; and—though nations, in their varied conditions, may thus modify and colour it—to keep it still pure,—the essence not dimmed nor perverted by these intellectual accidents, but still remaining in the majesty in which it showed itself originally to the minds of those who made the abstraction of the notion of God from its varied relations with us, and adored the absolutely perfect and the independently enduring.

And in such thoughts, amid the world's shocks and convulsions, or amid the changes, coming nearer to our hearts, of private life,—in these thoughts, amid all things, we find a source of peace, of love, of joy, and of hope: we believe in God.

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LECTURE V.

Divine Attributes.

If the principle be a just one which I am endeavouring to illustrate in these lectures; if we perceive that there are, common to all religions, certain elementary conceptions of God, his government, and his attributes; if these conceptions form the leading power of each particular religion; if they are thus common because they are in affinity with the intellectual and moral constitution of human nature; and if that affinity with the intellectual and moral constitution of human nature is a presumption of their independent, their objective character—of their existence and reality;—it will also follow, that in their legitimate developments we shall find similar characters of truth and power; but in these alone, for they may be irregularly, partially, erroneously developed. And our recognition of the truth of the original conception, of course, does not bind us to the acceptance of these partial, and, to our apprehension, erroneous, developments. They are so in all, or in almost all, religions. They are so in the religion of our country. The conception of a perfect being is deep amongst its roots, but we discern frequent contrariety with this conception in its actual developments. God is termed all-perfect in words; and yet actions are ascribed to him from which the good man would recoil. This is the sort of incongruity between the development and the original conception which it is my purpose to point out. We must, if we are to receive these developments as well as the original conception, ascribe perfection to a repenting and a vindictive being, to one who is capable of human passions in their most exaggerated form. What British judge is there on the bench that would not recoil from the notion of punishing the innocent for the guilty,—who would accept substitution in such a matter,—who would visit, not only with external punishment, but with the internal feelings of aversion, reprobation, and condemnation, one who was only guilty by substitution,

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by imputation, by a transfer which may be applicable to commercial intercourse, but which has no affinity with moral qualities? He would recoil from that which he ascribes to his Deity: and such is the development of the notion of God but too common in this country, and amongst other nations bearing the Christian name. It is received conventionally; it is the conception of a barbarous age, artificially preserved, and borne along by creeds, establishments, and other contrivances into a more civilised age. It is a notion which is interwoven, perhaps, with the imperfections of some states of human society, but which does not belong to it in other states, and ought to be repudiated in words, as it is in thought, whenever the moral sense is allowed its free scope and its fair action.

Here, then, is a distinction continually to be drawn; here is a case in which the simplicity of the original conception of a perfect being may serve us to hold in check and discriminate between the legitimate and the erring developments of that thought. Such differences must occur; the conception of perfection does not make perfection; the conception of absolute reason does not make an unerring reasoner. It is by humanity that these original ideas have to be developed; and therefore that development must partake of the limitations, the errors, the imperfections, of human nature. It must partake, not of these only, but also of those which are superinduced by the arrangements of society, by the influence of governments and education, on which a similar power operates, and which in their turn become causes as well as effects. We find, therefore, an agency, a constant agency, of obscuration and of error, acting upon that which in itself is so pure and simple. There is a counteracting power, indeed, in the records of their thoughts and feelings who have attained the higher degrees of wisdom amongst mankind; there is a counteracting agency in the ceaseless influences of nature; and the war is thus maintained between powers, some of which would hold man fast to his original and simple conception, and others lead him wide astray. How, for instance, can men, trained up with very different notions as to the object of human life and exertions, form in detail the same conception even of the infinitely perfect? The man to whom valour is virtue, with whom fighting is the noblest business

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of life, to whom "the joys of conquest are the joys of man" —can he conceive a Deity like that of the man of peace, who would lead his life in quietness, and cultivate universal harmony?

Where, then, it may be said, is the standard? I pretend not to say. Therein each "must minister to himself." The only practical standard I know of is this, that we endeavour to conceive of perfection as it appears to us in our best moments, when we are most in unison with all that is true and lovely in the intellectual, the moral, and even the physical world; and that we bring our other thoughts, the minor details of development in us, to as close an affinity or identification as we can with this thought. And if we find in ourselves an increasing sense of the perfect, the absolutely true and lovely; if we trace a congruity between this primary, elementary thought, and the other thoughts and associations that cluster around it, or spring from it; if our thoughts are at one with the tendencies of beautiful nature around us; if they harmonise with the progress of science, and if we are not liable to have a doctrine or a system upset by some fresh discovery in geology or astronomy; if they are such as the purest of our race have cherished in their purest moments; and if their beneficial tendency upon the hearts and lives, the conduct and the hopes, of men be also obvious;—then, I should say, though we have not an absolute standard, which we may take in our hands and walk through the world with, requiring every thing to correspond thereto, yet we have encouragement for ourselves, encouragement to persevere in cherishing such modes of thought and feeling, encouragement to our aspirations. We are stimulated to go on, not as dictatorial bigots, but as humble inquirers,—the true and genuine position of humanity, in all that relates to subjects in which the vastness of infinity and that incomprehensible eternity are involved, and with which they are connected.

And this may be done truthfully and earnestly by men who yet diverge in very different ways from one another, who would not abide the trial by each other's standard; but of whom it becomes none to say, "This is the absolutely right, and that the wrong; this the true, and that the false." Even though our own conceptions are as liable to be erroneous as those of any others, may we not see, in

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what we deem erroneous in different religions, in what makes us turn from them as arrant superstitions, as pernicious impostures perhaps,—may we not very often indeed trace in these that there has been an honest, though to us a mistaken, development of the original truth; and that those with whom we associate such feelings of condemnation and aversion are yet in reality striving, earnestly striving, to develop the thought that is in them—the conception of God, of absolute perfection, according to their means, abilities, and tendencies? There is much of this, I say, in all systems.

Majesty is a notion that inevitably associates itself with infinity. Man's God must be to him a majestic being. But then, what ideas have we of majesty? In reverentially endeavouring to render his homage, man may be only showing the poverty and lowness of his own conceptions. "Our God is majestic," say some; and they proceed to picture to themselves a crowned and sceptred Deity; they enthrone their God; they worship him as dwelling in the cloudy splendours of his palace, on the top of Mount Meru or of Olympus; or they hear his thunderings and his voice itself from the summit of Sinai. They erect his sapphire throne upon the blue expanse, and stretch over it a rainbow canopy. They surround him with a court—a court of angels and spirits, or of inferior deities. They endeavour to show this thought of majesty by rearing magnificent buildings, temples, the glory of the world's architecture, in which the impulse appears to have been strongest to rival the grandeur and the wonders of nature itself. And those who are poor in marble become rich in words. Proud of worshiping God in the simplicity which perhaps poverty enforces upon them, they array him in the pomp of phraseology; they make long prayers, and enumerate the varied attributes which they ascribe to him; and thus seem to work out, with perfect well-meaning, their notion of the majesty of the Infinite. Whilst there are those who see, in the quietness of intellectual energy, a power analogous to, but far above, that which, in the recesses of its councils, arbitrates on the condition and guides the destinies of nations; they see it silently operating through the regions of matter and of mind; and hence the contemplative man, when the association of majesty with divinity is strong

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within him, turns in disgust, perhaps, from all these tinsel shows of human greatness, whatever there may be to recommend them to his fancy; he seeks, for duly honouring the Divine majesty, marks of formation by Divinity itself; and he best contemplates it in that temple not built with hands, of which the world's wide expanse is the area, hills and mountains are the altars and pillars, the deep recesses of shady groves the sanctuary, the sky the roof, and the ocean its everlasting organ. There he holds communion with the majesty which, to his mind, is far above all other conceptions, and only degraded by the factitious pomp of human buildings and human ceremonies. Thus the contemplative man developes the notion in his way; and let him do it, and a blessing be on him; and blessing also be on the poorer fancy and the more lagging intellect that can see the highest majesty of which it conceives only in other ways and far inferior forms.

The notion of holiness also is one which belongs to the simplest conception of Deity that we can form; and yet to what wild doctrines, to what strange and cruel practices, has not its erring development often led humanity! Almost as soon as this attribute was distinctly contemplated, men, acting on the impulse of their own pride, began to ascribe to the Deity of holiness malevolent feelings towards other and opposite qualities. They held him to be "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" and therefore "angry with the wicked every day," and with an anger which is "a devouring flame." They fancy that deviation from their standard must be alienation from his love; and they require the mediation of a priest, or of an atoning sacrifice, or of a pleading saint or angel in heaven, or some such interposition, for their reconciliation. They fancy the punishment which holiness must inflict on those who have it not; they accumulate and describe—with what variety of power! —the tortures of their infernal regions. Tantalus with his ebbing flood, and Sisyphus with his stone; or the worse tortures of that hell which, under the name of Christianity, has been preached to the world, with its never-ending torments. They delight in the lashing of the serpent-whips of the Furies; they have called together all things dark and horrible, in order to image that which is really a truth —the holiness of the Infinite, and his love for the true and

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the good. Wiser he, to our perception, who perceives the relation and subordination of evil to good; who apprehends that the Deity meant virtue to be a progressive thing in human nature, to be attained by trial and struggle; and the comparative and relative perfection of his being only to be reached by strife within and without, from which the spirit mounts stronger and yet stronger after every conflict, until it basks in the brightness of the unclouded rays of the perfectly holy. They interpret the attribute of holiness; they develop it in a manner as gracious as the other is appalling; and in that light they rejoice; but they do not forget that these rude thoughts of wild and stern men have yet had a truth for their origin, and perhaps, even in their gloomiest representations, have had the love of that truth as the impulsive power over the mind of him by whom they are believed.

And so with the attribute of power. "God is powerful," says the savage,—"yes, I heard his thunder; I saw his lightning strike the oak, and shiver it." "God is powerful," says the Jew; "he divided the waters of the Red Sea, and gave us safe passage, and drowned Pharaoh with all his host." "God is powerful," says the Christian; "he raised the dead, and he will destroy the world and all that it contains." Such are graduated conceptions of power, according with different states of humanity. They have sunk as low even as the notion of mere physical strength, as in the hammer of Thor making a cavern in the earth by its blow; and they have risen as high as that unseen, that all-pervading Influence, which works all things according to the council of his own will; so that we say of God that his thoughts are objects, and his purposes events.

Then there is the notion of plurality. It is curious how common this has been—how the most monotheistic religions have not been able to shake it off. We find it every where: there is a trinity in Christianity; there is a trinity in Hindooism; a trinity in Plato; a trinity in the old Egyptian religion, with its Isis, Osiris, and Horus. Every where, the oneness of the thought of Divinity in man seems to have striven to blend itself with the notion of multitudinousness of manifestation, of person. And what is this but an effort after a firmer grasp of the Infinite, which we cannot so well conceive of under the strict monotheistic

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reference of Divinity to one conscious being, especially if that one conscious being is isolated, as it were, from the material world, and only a God *ab extrâ*—a Deity that lives without, and rules over, and thus manages, changes, and guides? Why, not merely in Hindooism, with its millions of deities; not merely in Greece, peopling every stream and valley, every forest and hill, with gods; not only in Egypt, venerating almost all things that have living existence; not only in hosts of angels and archangels, and saints and martyrs,—thus all breaking the interval between humanity and the one God, the God without, the independent being,—but in the Christian trinity itself, and in all similar efforts,—we discern, I think, intimations of this struggle to reconcile oneness with infinity. Mahometanism is more strictly monotheistic, perhaps, than any religion; yet there we have archangels near the throne of God, and "Eblis" to account for the existence of evil, and their chant of "There is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet." Christian Unitarianism has never found itself so much in sympathy with mankind, notwithstanding its boast, and its justified boast, to some extent, of superior rationality, as to diffuse itself very widely in society; nor can any system which does not bring Divinity nearer to us than the endeavour to conceive of an infinite person, and yet to separate that person from the world of existence. "The association of God with nature," said a child, "seems to me to cramp the idea of nature." And so it does, if we only suppose a God *ab extrâ*,—that is, something superinduced, something interposed. There is the cold relation of maker and made, the ruler and the ruled. The ascription of Godhead to Christ was a step in the doctrine, though it might at first seem in a backward direction. "God in Christ" was something towards God in humanity, as God in humanity was a progress towards God in universal nature. There alone we find the infinity which satisfies the thought; and departing from those blended notions that our own habit of conceiving of persons infuses into the mind, there we see one whose countenance towards us is in all that is grand and lovely; who is one with the majestic frame of the heavens and the earth; one with the mighty movements of material nature; one with intellectual and moral development in humanity; who lives, breathes, thinks, feels, acts, in and by all that is;

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all that is being one with him, and he all in all. Such, at least, is the last effort which the human mind seems to have made in the endeavour more fully to develop this notion of infinity, which so early and so strongly associates itself with the thought of God.

Such, then, being the case as to human efforts, when we look to the extent to which they are made, and the spirit in which they are made, we may surely abate the apprehensions which at first we are prone to entertain, as to the degree in which imposture and fraud have intermingled themselves with different religions. No doubt they have so intermingled,—the absurd with the sublime. The trickster has been there with his clever contrivances, in order to impress mankind with a notion of his sanctity, his wisdom, or his preternatural power. There has been the mixture of fanaticism and of hypocrisy; the latter quality induced upon the former, perhaps the more readily induced from the very strength of the individual's first belief in his own peculiar destiny, and his reception of peculiar communications from heaven. There is the indifference that patronises religion for the sake of others, and would recommend it on account of the convenience of its influence on their minds, rather than from any feeling of its worth to human nature. There have been all these tamperings, and many more, with truthfulness to ourselves, to religion, and to Deity; but still, after all allowance, we see much in the natural tendency of human thought, under the various and frequently adverse circumstances in which thought is exercised,—we see enough to account for, and make us charitable towards, even many of the worst superstitions that have existed in this world of ours.

And in this spirit, which I think best becomes us, groping our own way with labour and through difficulty towards higher and clearer light,—in this spirit let us survey those religions as they pass before us. Let them come with all their paraphernalia. Let those learned priests of old be there, who acquired so much insight into nature's secrets,—those Egyptian priests, bearing the books of Hermes, and the ark of Osiris. Let Moses stretch forth his rod, smite the rock, and produce living water for his people; or let him bring tables of stone, inscribed with the finger of God, and given him amidst the thunderings and

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lightnings of the sacred mountain. Let Babylon build its high tower for the Divinity, "a tower that shall reach up unto heaven." Let the Persian climb the hill-top, to catch the first beam of the rising sun, and prostrate himself in worship to that symbol of eternal light. Let the Druid rear with gigantic stones his mystic circle. Let the Greek behold each lovely scene peopled with lovely forms, until in nature, as well as in his own glorious city, it is "easier to find a god than a man." Let Catholic Christianity marshal its processions, elevate its host, and rear its stupendous cathedrals; and Protestantism glory in the sterner simplicity of its worship. Let them come in their social manifestations, or in that individual devotion which seeks the hermitage or flies to the wilderness. Thus let the sons of men pass before us. They are doing their work, in varied ways, very imperfectly, very erroneously often, as needs must be with the imperfection of their nature; but they are doing their work, the work of humanity, the work of Divinity. They are endeavouring to unfold, according to their means, their native conceptions of the religious ideas; they are labouring for that. And let us not look on as uninterested spectators; but let us look on with sympathy; let us look on with hope; let us look on with help, according to our ability,—that we too may have our share in the great result, our portion in the blessed heritage of eternal truth and happiness.

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LECTURE VI.

Creation and Providence.

Creation, Providence,—these are religious ideas of a secondary character; they affiliate themselves, so to speak, upon the first, grand, primary conception of Divinity. But they are religious ideas, and as such have asserted their universality. They are religious ideas, and as such they preceded scientific knowledge; and through this circumstance they have been connected with gross errors and with cruel persecutions. For the notions of creation and providence preceding those of law in nature,—preceding acquaintance with the phenomena which were thus supposed to be accounted for,—gave rise to various theories, which, receiving the sanction of churches and of states, fixed themselves in men's minds, and put the general notions of mankind on these topics in a state which, when science made its advances, implied either hostility or compromise. In the development of these ideas, there was freedom from those restrictions, from that guidance, which the progress of knowledge has afforded to later ages. They are, consequently, fraught with absurdity in the different modes of development that have been given to them in different ages. What is the common notion of creation, at this day, amongst those who hold the authority of sacred books paramount to that of the great volume of nature, as read by discovery and philosophy? There is sublimity, no doubt, in the commonly received description of creation,—a sublimity which the great critic of antiquity recognised in the grandeur of the expression, "Let there be light, and there was light;" but the sublimity is not of a kind in affinity with pure, lofty, spiritual notions of Deity, any more than with the facts of philosophy. It is a sublimity akin to that which we are made to feel by the Jupiter of Homer—a grandeur circumscribed, full of false assumptions, incongruous, and, in a certain view of it, theatrical, implying a darkened universe, a chaotic world with uni-

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versal gloom, a divine form commanding changes by enunciated words, an instant and preternatural transformation, and the existence as an independent substance of that which is only an emanation from other substance. All these show, though there may be poetical conception, and a certain degree of sublimity of thought, yet that, by the precedence of the notion of creation as a religious idea, and by the refusal, so often given by religious people, to entertain the discoveries of science as demonstrated realities, they have, in this matter, too often put what was called religion, and what was known to be fact and truth, at variance with one another.

The common notion of creation supposes a double action of miraculous power. First, the creation of confusion, in order, from that confusion, to make way for a second creation of order. The rough material is first produced, and then the harmonised world. Elements are created, intermingling and in disorder, in order that they may afterwards be separated, and assigned apart to their different spheres. And man—this fine and delicate frame of humanity, with its apparatus not only of flesh and bone, but of nerves and fibres, with its delicate tissues, with all its complicated apparatus—this is supposed to be moulded in clay, in red earth, in order that afterwards the breath of life may be breathed into it, and it may become a living soul. In such strange and fantastic ways have men, often in ignorance of what science had to teach the world, or perhaps conflicting with it after its instructions were promulgated,—in such imperfect manner have they endeavoured to develop the idea—the true, rational, universal idea—of the finite evolved from the infinite. And even these conceptions have more of coherence than many which have obtained admission, and implicit belief, and long continuance, in the world. For creation belongs to all religions; in fact, it seemed at one time to belong to all histories as well. A man could scarcely record the events of his own time, of which he might know a little, perhaps very little, without going back to that of which he could know nothing—the formation of the world. This was the beginning of their narratives of human affairs, as well as of their theories of divine government. And what strange and uncouth representations have they given! There was

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the old fable of the mundane egg, which, being divided, the lower portion formed the earth, and the upper the heavenly arch above it; of a fermenting chaos, evolving first divinities, and then human beings; of an exercise of power more frequently approaching to the lower and poorer—though it may be, to the ignorant, the more striking—exhibitions of power amongst us, than to any real agency worthy of human reverence.

Thus, in all religions, there have been the conceptions of divine origination—of a universal power—of the results of that power in the objects of our senses, and the objects of our thoughts and reflections. Every where there is the recognition of creation and of a creator. Even the seeming denials of it come to the same thing, when they are attentively regarded and fairly analysed. Those who asserted that the world was eternal, did not mean the eternity of the world as it now exists, or as it did exist in their times. They might as well have asserted the eternity of towns and cities. They supposed progress; they supposed an originating and developing power. They described the action of the original elements—chaos; but from chaos something springing by a natural result. They showed a universe tending in confusion towards order, and in darkness towards light. The old Grecian poet, who endeavoured to trace the origin of things, tells us how, after Chaos, Love arose, and one divine form after another appeared, and the heavens separated themselves from the earth, and the earth from the ocean, until the nations had each their various localities, and the gods their abode on high Olympus. Amid all the confusion of what claims to be taken literally, and what is obviously meant as allegory, — in all the theorising and the invention,—we still find this idea of a living power and principle in nature. They seem to say, "Nature lives,"—a truth, — "and therefore nature is divine." They trace what others have traced in different ways, but still with the same pervading thought, the same previous impulse in the human mind—the notion of the infinite originating the finite; and this is essentially the conception of creation. It is not by operations approaching to those of magic and conjuration. It is not by audible commands and elemental obedience. It is not by spoken words, and nothing thereby becoming something. It is not

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thus that creation is rationally conceived. These are the thoughts of children and of savages. They are feeble attempts to give an external and pictorial representation to that which the mind has conceived, and which it endeavours to realise; but which it requires the aids of growing knowledge and of extending science to accomplish more clearly, though at last how imperfectly! The notion of law, universal law, in nature, when once it arises, and is clearly apprehended, brings what is called creation within the same category as the events by which it is followed; it sees in them all developments, and developments only—the one infinite, universal, and eternal, the great Original, and all else modifications and manifestations. What a chasm there is, what a wide gulf, between the notions of creation so generally received on the sanction of sacred books, and those to which the world is now evidently coming—finding creation regulated by law—tracing the "vestiges" of that law—seeing how, in the order of things, one form of existence has followed another, as one form of the material globe which is their habitation has followed another—and thus, as the last thought of humanity upon this still perplexing subject, resting in the conviction that creation is a work according to law, Divine law, which goes on in this world and in other worlds, and has its proper place assigned it, not amongst preternatural and unaccountable phenomena, but in the common relation of cause and effect.

And how nature swarms with life! how the earth teems with life! The seeds of life—the principle or spirit of life—appear to be every where. The transparent air is filled with beings which the microscope renders visible. We call worlds, planets, suns, the habitations of living beings; but the probability is, that not these alone, but the immense spaces between, have their populations also, though utterly invisible to the senses of the inhabitants of those worlds, and defying the power of their optical instruments. As whatever we can observe is full of life, that which is hidden from our observation is in all likelihood filled in the same manner. How very narrow are the limits of our senses, even when extended by artificial means! Sounds there are which we cannot hear—some may be too loud, and some too low; objects of sight there are to which our senses cannot reach; but as we find uniformity of law in

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all that is subject to our observation, we may presume it in that which is not. And amongst those laws certainly this has its prominent place—that life, life is every where—in the opaque earth as well as in the transparent air; the waters are full of life. This human frame is built up of particles that are capable of separate existence and life; the very globules of the blood that flows in our veins may have, and under certain circumstances do possess, their independent being. The huge cliffs that guard our shores are often found to be congeries of myriads of minute beings that once had their existence, and their measure of enjoyment. The mummy-wheat is growing in our gardens; the burial of three thousand years has not extinguished its vitality, but the ears of Pharaoh's corn are reproduced in our own day and country. Turn up the soil; to whatever depth you go, you still find life within it; at the greatest depth, that which has not seen the light of day for many a revolving century, when spread abroad to the influence of air and sunshine, it puts forth some kind of vegetation. At different depths of the soil are different kinds of vegetation, all corresponding with the nature of the soil from which they spring; and each of such kinds of vegetation is the nucleus of animal life, of insect life, in its boundless varieties. Life is every where, above us, and around us, and within us; and I say again that nature lives, and therefore nature is divine.

The prejudices that have operated against the recognition of law in creation would of course affect in a similar way the recognition of law in Providence. All believe in Providence; but they expect its intervention; they look for it in the particular, and not in the universal. Jove nods assent to the prayer of the good man, or he hurls his thunderbolts at the wicked. Jehovah sends a storm to favour the advance of the Israelitish army, his hailstones driving full in the face of the Canaanitish hosts. Deliverance is prayed for; and the billows hush their roaring, and the bark is saved. Interposition by unseen means, but still preternatural, is the common faith of religionists, even at the present day. They do not note that each department has its laws, its separate laws—those of the material world, those of the mental world, those of the moral world. The ship not seaworthy will founder, whatever cargo it may

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bear of knowledge or benevolence. Wrong will recoil on the wrong-doer. The careful will accumulate, though his heart be hard as the nether millstone. Those who act according to the laws of any department of being will find their reward in the results to which such actions tend; and it is but a misapplication of the notion of Providence, if they expect the laws of one series of events to be interrupted and turned aside by the laws which only regulate another series of events. But in due time this identity is perceptible, and as it is apprehended, the entire view opens upon man of a system of things in which there is one pervading life, soul, spirit, tendency,—in which all are harmonised,—and which, therefore, through the diversities that may form the occasion of sore perplexity to those who only see a part, yet must tend eventually to general good. As this opens upon the mind, there comes that thought which constitutes the beauty, the grandeur, the power of all religions, and of the religious tendency in human nature —a beneficently harmonised world, though by a long process. And this has ever been the song of poets, teaching—

> "All discord, harmony not understood;
> All partial evil, universal good."

This has been the reflection of the philosopher, exclaiming, "It is heaven upon earth for a man's mind to move in charity, rest on Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth." This general consent and ultimate universality of good constituted the prophecy of the sibyl's leaves that were scattered abroad. This is the inspiration of those Orphic hymns of such remote antiquity. This has been the anticipation of those who have struggled even to martyrdom and self-sacrifice in the cause of humanity. This is the millennium of the Christian, and the Utopia of the philanthropist. This is the future golden age, which religions have so generally promised, while they recorded a past golden age. This is the "new Jerusalem;" this the revolution of the great Platonic year; this the harmony which Pythagoras heard, "the music of the spheres;" the chorus which he of the Apocalypse listened to, when every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them, joined in their glorious hymn to the almighty and universal Power. This has been

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the anticipation of all, and this is the ultimate result of universal law, the great development towards which all things tend, of the infinite in the finite, of God in humanity and in nature.

Hence has followed in the human mind the sensation of piety; hence what are called the theopathetic affections, —the trust, the reverence, the love, the gratitude, which humanity exercises towards the Being thus conceived of and thus acting. And when this feeling has been so produced in the mind, what is there that does not minister thereto? The grandest objects in nature, and the lowliest; the sternest seasons, and the brightest and most lovely; every thing is instinct with meaning, and seems to speak to a mind thus impressed, to speak to the inmost heart and soul, and make its revelations there. The human affections, in their diversity, according to our many relations, also become its ministers. The love of God may often have been a vision; but it is not therefore visionary. Communion with the infinite Spirit may have been the dream of many enthusiasts; but it is not therefore in itself dreamy. There is a harmony with the spirit and life of things, of which the mind becomes conscious; and hence it is that no theories of law, no doctrines of necessity, no assurances of infinite unchangeableness, can keep down, in some circumstances, the tendency of the human constitution to expressive devotion, to prayer, to that longing and craving after sympathy, which, baffled as to the particular, applies to the great generality, and would be at one with the universal harmony, although its own lot may be felt for the time discordant. True piety ever prays with a condition: "Not my will, but thine be done." It trusts that the cloud is ministering to good, although its shadow, for the time, casts a deeper and lengthening gloom, and believes it to be as much a minister of good as the brightness of the sunshine it has displaced. There is a longing in the mind that is penetrated with the truth, the beauty, the harmony of things, to be at one with him, their Maker, their pervading Spirit, who himself is one with them; and thus to have a share and portion in this great enjoyment which beams abroad over the face of heaven and of earth.

Such are the tendencies of piety, of "natural piety," as it has been rightly called, springing up in man spon-

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taneously, springing up from his inward thoughts and convictions, and finding merely suggestions in outward circumstances,—though its contemplations of the boundless and the infinite vary, indeed, in some measure, according to those circumstances; and if, when men praise and rejoice in the Divinity, they hail him as the almighty Creator, the great universal Power, the infinite Spirit, they also feel the admonition in their times of sorrow and trial, —"When ye pray, say, Our Father."

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LECTURE VII.

Redemption.

The subject of Redemption follows those of Creation and Providence, belonging, like them, to the secondary ideas of religion in the natural history of their production in the human mind, although in the systems of artificial theology it is made the most prominent of all. In the fragments which are preserved of the ancient Phœnician writer Sanchoniathon, there is the following account of a mystical sacrifice of the Egyptians:

"It was the custom among the ancients, in times of great calamity, to prevent the ruin of all, for the rulers of the city or nation to sacrifice to the avenging deities the most beloved of their children as the price of redemption: they who were devoted for this purpose were offered mystically. For Cronus, whom the Phœnicians call Il, and who after his death was deified and instated in the planet which bears his name, when king, had by a nymph of the country called Anobret an only son, who on that account is styled Jeoud, for so the Phœnicians still call an only son: and when great danger from war beset the land, he adorned the altar, and invested this son with the emblems of royalty, and sacrificed him."

On this passage, Bryant, in his work on *Ancient Mythology*, has the following comments:

"The mystical sacrifice of the Phœnicians had these requisites—that a prince was to offer it, and his only son was to be the victim: and as I have shown that this could not relate to any thing *prior*, let us consider what is said upon the subject as *future*, and attend to the consequence. For if the sacrifice of the Phœnicians was the type of another to come, the nature of this last will be known from the representation by which it was prefigured. According to this, El, the supreme deity, whose associates were the Elohim, was, in process of time, to have a son *αγαπητον well-beloved*, *μονογενη* his *only-begotten;* who

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was to be conceived of *ανωθρετ*, as some render it, of *grace*, but, according to my interpretation, of the *fountain of light*. He was to be called Jeoud, whatever that name may relate to; and to be offered up as a sacrifice to his father, *λυτρον*, by way of satisfaction and redemption; *τιμωροις δαιμοσι*, to atone for the sins of others, and avert the just vengeance of God; *αντι της παντων φθορας*, to prevent universal corruption, and, at the same time, general ruin. And it is further remarkable, he was to make the grand sacrifice, *βασιλικῳ σχηματι κεκοσμημενος*, invested with the emblems of royalty. These surely are very strong expressions; and the whole is an aggregate of circumstances highly significant, which cannot be the result of chance. All that I have requested to be allowed me in the progress of this recital is this simple supposition, that *this mystical sacrifice was a type of something to come:* how truly it corresponds to that which I imagine it alludes to, I submit to the reader's judgment. I think it must be necessarily esteemed a most wonderful piece of history."

The commentator has here, I think, introduced some adjuncts which are not in the original record. But we know his starting-point, and every one must perceive that to which he is tending. The analogy is one of those many resemblances which have so often presented themselves to the mind, sometimes to perplex, and sometimes to be made available as arguments by, the advocates of modern systematic theology. The Christian scheme of redemption, as expounded by the doctrines of the Church of England, or those of what are called Evangelical Dissenters, is clearly that towards which the mind of the writer is directed. He finds something similar in a sacrifice of the ancient Phœnicians. How account for this? For the modern doctrine of redemption is supposed to be a mystery above the reach of human faculties,—above the flight of human invention,—a doctrine peculiarly of revelation; and yet here we have a barbarous people, in a barbarous age, exhibiting pictorially, according to their version, the same thing. It is vain to appeal to a prior revelation: the Phœnicians had no prophets amongst them—at least, none recognised by the adherents of Judaism and of Christianity. Bryant, indeed, has recurred to the supposition of a traditional prophecy entertained amongst the descendants of Esau, and derived

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from Abraham,—a story which has no evidence whatever to support it, and which is scarcely compatible with the chronology, to say nothing of the locality, of the transaction. We have something of the same sort as the modern plan of redemption in systematic theology, in a remote time, amongst a semi-civilised people, and attended with circumstances to render it as independent as possible of the Jewish and the Christian revelations. And this perplexity—or this argument, if they will—often besets the advocates of that theology. Trinities, incarnations, virgin mothers, and atonements, are to be found in a great variety of religions, and under a great diversity of circumstances. May it not be that the true solution lies somewhat deeper than theirs, and that these are the incidents—the pictorial, or emblematical, or, if you will, typical, working out—of some thought which is common to humanity; and that when we penetrate through what there is of absurdity and of cruelty—and there is too often much of both—we shall arrive at an idea which is worth preserving,—at another contribution to the religion of humanity?

Sacrifices abounded in the ancient world. They were the common expression and form of worship. Men honoured heaven by sacrifice, and by sacrifice they confirmed the compacts of earth. Various notions, in different stages of knowledge and feeling, were associated with this work. Sometimes it was of the simplest kind, the most harmless and inoffensive; life was ever spared; only flowers and fruits were presented to the great Benefactor. At other times, blood flowed abundantly—even human blood, in too many recorded and authenticated instances. Some entertained the gross notion that sacrifices gave food to their deities,—that the divine nature pined away, as it were, without that food. The Jewish scriptures record the gratification of Divinity from smelling a sweet odour in sacrifice. As they rose above this, sacrifices became acts of homage, rendering back the first-fruits to the bestower of all fruits; or they were an acknowledgment of greatness and beneficence, in which occasionally efforts were made that the splendour of the sacrifice should correspond with the magnitude of the bounty. Thus, Pythagoras is said to have offered a hecatomb on the discovery of the well-known proposition which bears his name. Deity was honoured by what appealed to

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sight as well as by what appealed to the sense of hearing; although this, too, had its functions, as the Deity is glorified by beating gongs in China, and with salvoes of artillery in Europe, to this day. But there was something besides this, and more than this, in the sacrifices of antiquity. The rational religionists, as they call themselves, of the present time are often much perplexed with this subject, in their endeavours to get rid of the common notions of atonement and satisfaction. Expel those notions from the pages of the Jewish and Christian scriptures I think they cannot, by any verbal criticism or torture of texts whatever. Plainly, in the ancient world, the expiatory notion—the notion of suffering transferred—prevailed very largely. There was the idea of one being suffering so as to mitigate or remove the sufferings of another; and in this idea, which rational theology has often made war upon, I apprehend we have a great and profound moral truth,—the fact that it is by suffering, by the sufferings often of the wisest and the best, that mankind are liberated from the evils under which they groan, and led onward towards the good which they desiderate.

Redeemers, thus understood, the world has had many, both historical and mythological; and it makes no difference to my present purpose whether they be historical or mythological; for in the appreciation of the history, and in the origination of the mythos, we trace the same fact, namely, the existence of this notion of redemption in the human mind. It is alike visible in what is merely recorded and admired, and in what is produced; its production being in harmony with the opinions and feelings of those amongst whom such myth originates. We have Moses, according to the record, praying the Deity that his name might be blotted out from the book of life, so that Israel was but spared, and conducted in safety and in triumph into the possession of the promised land. He refuses for himself and his posterity the offer of becoming a great nation, under the auspicious guidance of the Omnipotent; he renounces self for others, and dies on the borders of that land which he was not permitted to enter,—dies on the borders willingly, with a glad anticipation of successes in which he should have no personal share, of the triumph of principles to which, and of a people to whom, his whole being was devoted. We have ano-

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ther redeemer in the Prometheus of the Greek legends, the sympathising and generous Titan, who resents the niggardliness of Jove towards human beings, who teaches them the different arts by which life is supported and rendered convenient and joyous, who steals celestial fire that he may cherish by its use those towards whom his whole affections thus nobly and self-sacrificingly flow. In Prometheus chained to his rock, his breast torn by the vulture, but defying the power of his Olympian persecutor, and rejoicing in the memory of what he had done, and in what his influence was still doing for mortals,—in this we have the exhibition of a redeemer, strangely combining—as Coleridge has well observed—the scriptural attributes of Christ and of Satan, the rebel and the Saviour, in one person.

In the history—real or exaggerated—of Agis, the self-devoted king of Sparta, that he might reclaim his people from their dissolute manners and oppressive practices, and restore the pure institutions of Lycurgus, going cheerfully to execution, and smiling at the superiority of his own lot over that of his murderers; in the Roman Curtius, leaping into the gulf; in all who, at any time, or in any country, have given themselves up to some great or good work, and have endeavoured, through peril or persecution, to essay its achievement,—in them all we see this self-same principle of sacrifice, we see the redeeming principle. We find it too in women as well as in men, and perhaps much more abundantly; from that Egyptian Isis of old, wandering through the world, amid much endurance, to gather together the scattered members of Osiris; in that Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon; or in the parallel instance of the daughter of Jephtha, cheerfully submitting to a sacrifice which was the purchase of victory for a parent and the leader of his country's troops, in what was deemed a just and honourable warfare; in others of later times, who have manifested similar devotion, and in whom, as in the case of Joan of Arc, the sacrifice has extended not merely to life, but beyond life, through centuries of disgrace and infamy, until poetic hearts and philosophic minds have rendered them a tardy justice: in these we still see the same principle at work, and similar results arising from similar exertions and devotedness. And perhaps the most beautiful of all in that Catholic superstition—if we may indeed call it

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so, because it seems hard to apply the term superstition to such a worship, whilst we are so much more tender and sparing towards many of the notions that flourish around us, with less of beauty and more of a perverting power—but in the Catholic worship of the Virgin Mary, in the deification of the gentle mother, in the homage rendered to her who watched over the infancy of the Divine with anxiety, feeling beforehand the piercing of that sword which was to penetrate her very heart, in the sight of his sufferings when she stood beside the cross; in the homage rendered to her, identifying her with similar women, though they were the creation only of mythological or poetical imaginations in ancient times; in all that raises her to the rank of Astarte, the queen of heaven, and acknowledges her power over the stormy waters, as well as in times and seasons of trial and trouble on the land; in all which recognises in her that beauty which has softened so many stern hearts, that consolation which has strengthened so many failing hearts of the distressed, the afflicted, and the suffering,—which has restrained from wandering into vicious paths those struggling with temptation,—which has formed an object midway, as it were, between the conceptions of infinite Deity and of erring humanity,—in this least objectionable of all idolatries, in this most lovely, and, in its tendencies, most useful, of all superstitions, we behold another phase and form of the principle of redemption—of redemption by endurance, by devotion, and by the moral influence which attends upon self-sacrifice.

And yet, into how strange a shape has this notion been tortured by theologians! Metaphysical ingenuity has been altogether exercised upon what was accidental and subordinate, and never on the primary conception. There is the doctrine manufactured from it which consigns the whole human race to total depravity of nature and endless torment of condition; which represents them altogether as a loathsome mass of sin and deserved suffering; which affects to put Providence in a dilemma, and reduces the Deity to saying, on the question of redemption, "Die, man, or Justice must;" which supposes an incarnate Deity, for the purpose of bearing this load of sin and misery, and expiating it by his own agonising death on the cross, enduring not only the desertion of man, but, we are told, the

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desertion of Deity also, in that awful moment. Such is the strange theory by which the conception of a pure and lovely devotion for the good of others, of endurance for their sakes, and of accomplishing their deliverance by endurance, is obscured, perverted, perplexed, and erected into a doctrine which, were it not consecrated by a conventional sanctity, and robbed of its horrors by its familiarity with all our thoughts, would be turned from, one might almost say, with indignation and abhorrence. How unlike it is to what—apart from the speculations and theories of the epistles of the New-Testament writers—is recorded by the evangelists of Christ. To come into their narrative, after such a doctrine, is like breathing the pure and balmy air after being choked and terrified by the dark horrors of a cavern. We see there a man moving amongst his fellow-men in kindness and love, divine truth beaming upon him in bright rays from the heaven above, or more correctly, perhaps, rising up to his lips from the abysses of his own beneficent heart; teaching the lesson of universal love, and practising what he taught; mild and condescending to the child or to the social outcast; scorning none—publicans and sinners ever welcome to his tender regards, his just appreciation, and his wise instructions—and for this, hated and accused, calumniated and opposed; the multitude frequently ready to take summary vengeance upon him for what they deemed an inconsistency with some of the tenets of their law, once and again taking up stones to stone him; frowned upon by all those who possessed station and influence in the land, those who were in office only venturing to come to him under the protecting shadow of the night; and at last, amidst the popular acclamations, and after that intense agony which the prospect of an immediate and violent death produced in the garden of Gethsemane, haled away, amid the shouts of the people, to the endurance of his final suffering; even then a spirit of forgiveness and love radiating from the cross, and beaming around him an unfading halo.

Hence it has ever been so dear; for not all the aggrandisements which theology has heaped on Jesus, not that mythic tale of preternatural birth, not that doctrine of deification, not that seat at the imagined right hand of God above the blue arch of heaven, not that ascen-

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sion, visible from the earth to multitudes of disciples, through the air to the regions above, not that coming again in the clouds of heaven, not that trumpet of the archangel, or the earthquakes and summoning of the human race, and the division of sheep and goats to their respective allotments of eternal glory or eternal torment,—not all this, nor all the pomp and homage that has ever been rendered as to an incarnate God, can compare, in moral loveliness and moral grandeur, with that sign of meek, enduring nature, with that sustainment of persecution through life, and the exercise of the utmost self-sacrifice and devotion in the very agonies of death, which have rendered the cross the appropriate type of Christianity, have endeared it to men's hearts, have made it a consecrated emblem, and have exalted it in the clouds of heaven above all human divinities.

Here, then, is the principle of redemption; not in the metaphysical doctrine of the transfer of sin and of righteousness—a sort of juggling with moral qualities, as if they were marketable commodities; not in divine vindictiveness—a strange and foul conception for man to entertain; but in the truth, the law—perceived but late it may be, yet shadowed forth early in men's thoughts and feelings—that if we would serve our fellow-beings, we must be content to suffer; that no great benefit, no extended emancipation—whether from mental slavery, from political bondage, or from social evil—no great work of emancipation, of deliverance, of redemption, is ever wrought by humanity, unless the benevolent heart that undertakes the task has the strength of self-sacrifice, and is content to lay its account with long-continued endurance and with bitter agony. This is the mode in which humanity is served and man is matured. It is to such that the thoughts turn. When politicians express their allegiance to the cause of freedom, they pledge the memories of those who died in the field or on the scaffold. When the energies of nations awake, their minds first turn, not to those who have conquered, but to those who have fallen. The lingering friends of liberty in Rome looked to the name of Cato, and the victorious cause that pleased the gods was held by them to be inferior to the vanquished cause for which Cato sacrificed his own life. The name of Kosciusko is that which recurs to the Pole

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when he groans over the bondage of his native land, and heaves an earnest sigh for its deliverance. When we think of the slave or the prisoner, Clarkson arises to our mind, urged by the conception of African suffering and the horrors of the middle passage to the intensity of fever; consecrating to the remedy of such evils his entire powers; braving calumny and opposition, enduring hostility and coldness, and working on, year after year, through the lapse of half a century, before the first beams of light, the recompense of his labours, broke upon the world. And thus Howard went from region to region: still the clank of the prisoner's chain was in his ears, still the perception was ever present to his senses of the loathsome and stifling vapour of the prisoner's dungeon; still the evils, physical and moral, of those who were thus enduring needless tortures and depraving tortures, instead of being led gently through a reformatory process,—these still urged on his mind, sending him forward, regardless of power and station, all the attractions of art, and all the minor elements of human enjoyment; going to gaol after gaol, like a messenger from heaven—not one whose nature was incapable of being touched with feeling for their sorrows, but with a keen perception of all—till at last his own life fell a victim to that prison-fever which he had so often breathed, and which he had done so much towards abolishing and sweeping away from the face of the earth.

Thus has it ever been. We hear of hero-worship, and let mankind render due homage to the successful hero; but there is a grander thing than hero-worship, unless we identify the hero with the martyr, who is indeed the greatest, and render to the martyr the worship which humanity has ever been ready to render, and which is indeed a faith in the natural doctrine of redemption by sacrifice.

The beings thus devoted hold on their course, though hope may fail; all hope as to personal objects, and perhaps all near hope of the accomplishment of those wider, loftier purposes to which they are consecrated. It is not hope on which their souls feed, at least not a hope in which self has any concern. It is the perception, the strong perception, of good arising out of and displacing some deep and dark existing evil. The good, the deliverance, fills their minds;

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it brightens and pervades and rules there. It possesses itself of every thought, as the spirit of God possesses every atom of universal being. It animates them; they say with Christ, "I have a baptism wherewith to be baptised, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—"My meat and drink are to do the will of Him that sent me;" and so they labour on until the good is achieved, and the great redress, deliverance, or redemption of their thoughts is attained. It is not a sense of duty, it is not obedience to a law, there is nothing of mere fancy about it. They are not working for fame or glory, not they; they are working for a good which has become in their minds an existing and essential reality, which displaces other things as shadows and phantasms, and to which their whole being is devoted.

The wise laws of Providence do not allow the individual to be morally sacrificed by this devotion. Suffering they may take upon them and bear; sin they cannot take upon them and feel. In redeeming others, they redeem themselves. As they achieve their works of mercy, they are nearer to God—they grow up into his likeness; their own being becomes more pure, more exalted, more godlike, with every renunciation of what, according to common thoughts, may tend to the support and the gratification of that being. Thus the redeemer has glory in the redemption for which he sinks every other thought; in his life we trace a pure emanation of Divinity; and we feel that death restores or raises him to a more perfect identification with that Divinity.

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LECTURE VIII.

Human Immortality.

The philosophers, both of the material and spiritual systems, the mere naturalist speculators of every kind and class, all agree in the peculiarity of the human constitution. While some say it differs from that of inferior animals in the gift of a spiritual and immaterial principle of thought, akin to the Deity, others, denying any such principle, yet allow that it has material organs which are different from, and, in their functions, superior to, those of other creatures. All place the *genus homo* in a peculiar and elevated position. The world smiles at the classification of Linnæus, and will not recognise, in any thing more than the barest technicality, that humanity is to be assigned to the same region of being with the whale, the monkey, or the bat. Even those who tell us that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile, are yet compelled to allow that the human brain secretes thoughts of which brute brains are altogether incapable,—which are above their sphere, and beyond their compass. Man stands alone, and in nothing more alone than this, that as to his being he looks backward and forward; he alone asks the whence and the whither of his destiny; he alone claims to speculate on things beyond the range of his sensuous observation or his earthly experience. And assuredly he has a right to be heard for himself. Does he submit to the classification sometimes made? Does he plead guilty to mere brutedom? Does he consent to own corruption for his father, and the grave for his mother? Is he willing to be

> "Borne round in earth's diurnal course
> With stocks and stones and trees"?

or to be at last in no wise distinguishable but in form from the brutes that range the forest or fatten in the field? What is his voice in this matter? By philosophers of all classes it is thought worth something upon many points;

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it has its weight in questions of scientific invention and progress, of social improvement, of political right; and if there be any soundness in the structure which I am endeavouring to erect in these lectures, his voice is potential as to the notions we entertain of invisible and enduring power. He is authorised to say to the world that there is a God, for he believes in God; and surely he is entitled to say what he thinks of himself, his being, his progress, and his destiny. The voice of nature interrogates him, catechises him, asks—"Who art thou?—whence coming, and whither going?" and his reply—the reply of all ages, the reply of all countries—has been: "I am the child of God; I am the heir of immortality."

But, say some, man naturally is densely and helplessly ignorant of spiritual things; he knows nothing of religious ideas but by instruction; they all come to him from without. And what is the proof of this? We are told that the deaf and dumb, deprived of tuition, have no religious conceptions. It is forgotten how readily they receive them when communicated, as if in affinity with their being, with its hitherto undeveloped tendencies and aspirings. The appeal is carried further; to the instances—the few instances—which have occurred of isolated human beings,—Peter the Wild Boy, the Savage of Aveyron, and such; and we are told that they had no conceptions of God and immortality. And are we to infer from this that neither had the great mass of humanity such conceptions, unless by instruction from without, from something preternatural and above humanity? But these abnormal instances of human existence prove too much. They would prove man a quadruped; for all these beings have been found running on all-fours. They would prove articulate speech not natural to man,—a conclusion, perhaps, from which some theologians would not shrink. But they would prove, beyond this, what is not so easily disposed of, that man is not a social being, or that the qualities, functions, and tendencies of an essentially social being can be developed in the solitary state, or judged of by the solitary condition. Why, the gregarious animal does not show what it is,—does not display its whole nature, and cannot, if it is utterly separated from its kind; no more can those of human kind. The readiness with which, when instruction is imparted, the reli-

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gious ideas find admission even to the densest minds, and those most unfortunately situated, shows that there is in us something which relates to those ideas; something which disposes the mind, like soil, for their reception; something in which they naturally grow and germinate. These are all exceptional cases, not more difficult, not so difficult, to account for as the intellectual men, the instructed minds, that have at different times avowed their disbelief both in immortality and in Deity. And these we have yet felt ourselves authorised to treat merely as exceptional cases. They have never been found so in affinity with the common sense and feeling of mankind as for any course of time to establish their blank negation in the world. It has prevailed for a while, but it has soon passed away; and they might be addressed in the language of the bard to Edward:

> "Fond, impious man! think'st thou yon sanguine cloud,
> Raised by thy breath, has quench'd the orb of day?
> To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
> And glads the nations with redoubled ray."

And so has ever the faith in God and immortality risen from these seasons of eclipse, and poured forth a brighter and stronger tide of light upon the nations.

The absence of any direct antagonistic evidence, still more of any absolute disproof, of a future life, is a point to which I have so repeatedly adverted in this place, that I need but glance at it. The most that can be said is, that we do not see the principle of thought; and if we did, it might be said, perhaps, that we did not see in it the elements and the certainty of continuous existence. And what then? Is not nature full of powers and principles, ever-acting agencies, which are not subject to our perception, which the eye cannot detect, which the ear cannot hear, which the knife of the most accomplished dissector cannot lay bare, as he does the muscles and sinews of the human frame,—which even the microscope does not exhibit—the microscope, which has its boundaries as well as the human eye, and is only the little extension of a little power to limits somewhat wider? Invisibility to our sense is no disproof of existence, of active agency, of continuous being. Nor is there any presumption against the future life of the human being that might not, at some period of the world's

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history, have been alleged against all the orders of existence which, in their long succession, have sprung up and occupied spheres prepared for them by the previous operation of great Nature. If we go back to the time when the elemental powers and principles of this world were yet struggling in what we call their chaotic state; when they were but gradually subsiding, according to their several densities; when the globe was but assuming its form and its place in the planetary system,—what a presumption might then have been raised by some spiritual observer against life ever springing up here! What symptom was there of life? All was inanimate, unorganised; there seemed no materials which philosophy could demonstrate would, by their composition, produce any such strange and striking phenomenon as vitality. And yet, when they subsided in order, the moss sprung up upon the rock, and the seaweeds began to spread themselves in the depths of ocean. Again, it might be argued, there is nothing here like conscious existence; there is nothing that feels pain or pleasure; nothing here that deserves the name of life in the higher acceptation of that word, nor any evidence of the possibility of its existence. And yet geological ages roll on, and these phenomena come in their due time; and fish disport themselves in the waters, and birds fly in the air, and the various tribes of being, advancing in their nature, people the wildernesses of the dry land. Still the presumption might have been against a being endowed with reason, gifted with the various faculties by which man looks before and after, attaining to that compass of knowledge which is within his reach, as to the elements of nature, and the mode in which they may be applied to his own subsistence and comfort. But, in spite of all such presumptions, man's habitation is there, and man springs up and takes possession. Now, we have in each of these cases as strong a presumption against the next form of being as there is, as there can be raised, against the future life of the human being. And yet all these presumptions were fallacious. We have, moreover, the advantage of being able to trace this ascending series of development; of seeing how a superior form has always succeeded to an inferior; how the golden chain has been still continued: and what reason can be given why it should now terminate, be broken off, and the whole system left eternally imperfect?

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In regarding the future life of man as a religious idea, we must not confound it with the delineations that have been presented of that existence, or the arguments that have been advanced in its behalf. A distinct conception of its nature, a logical demonstration of its certainty, are both very different things from a moral persuasion that we are its inheritors. It may remain, although they are entirely disproved. There is one thing, indeed, which they prove. They prove the hold which this notion takes upon the mind, and the stimulus which it gives to our powers. With some, future life has been the metempsychosis. They have seen vitality passing from humanity to the brute creation, and from the brute creation to humanity again—perhaps a system of rewards and punishments in these various transmigrations. There was the hades of the old time—that gloomy and shadowy region deep in the bowels of the earth. There was the sensuous paradise of the Mahometan. There have been the various conceptions and locations by which the Christian heaven has, at different periods, been characterised. There have been the future heavens of barbarians, where their condition of bliss was to be an everlasting tournament, cutting each other to pieces every morning, and regaining life to enjoy the banquet afterwards; and again the same the next day, until life was one fight eternal. There have been schemes as wild, yet as distinctly delineated, as if these geographers had visited

> "That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
> No traveller returns."

These are but the shadows of earth cast upon the clouds. They are like the feeling, as it were, of the earth for the reality of the moon, when its own shade puts it in eclipse. They show a sort of groping after that which is beyond our reach; and though they prove nothing else, at least they prove this, that on a future state of existence man is intent, and that he cannot so bridle or curb his imagination, but that it will disport itself in fancies and suppositions, although it can have no acquaintance with the realities.

And so with the different grounds on which the faith has been rested. They are as various as the delineations themselves. The Mahometan believes in it, for the Koran says it; and the Koran is the recorded language of

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God: Allah affirms it, and therefore it is true. There were philosophers who believed the future existence of the soul, because they thought they had proved its past existence. Having arrived, in their way, by logical deduction, at a preëxistence, they argued a future existence. Some have rested the belief of immortality on the assertion of their legislators. The great lawgivers of antiquity generally professed to declare it in the name of the Deity, thinking it conducive to the obligation of their laws and institutions on the consciences, as well as on the external actions, of those for whom they legislated. Some have believed in it because they supposed they had seen, or known, or had had authenticated to them that others had seen, the ghosts of the departed. Some believe that all men will rise from the dead, because they hold to the historical testimony that Christ rose from the dead. In a thousand different ways have men advanced towards this same conclusion, showing their determination to get at the conclusion by some route or other; the mistake being here, that it was not in their arguments, but in the tendency of their being, in the inextinguishable desire within us for such a state, and in its strength and prevalence,—it was in showing this that the value of the indication consisted, and not in bare logic.

The notion of a future life—of immortality—has always presented itself as a religious idea; it has always assumed the form, the character, the relations, of a religious idea. There are passions of the earth that rule, and run their course in reference to earthly things. Ambition delights in the tumult of battle, the shout of victory, the formation and the conquest of empires. Avarice accumulates its stores, and drives its thriving trade, with reference either to the mere possession of wealth, or to the various uses and advantages which wealth gives in society. Invention, the child of necessity, seeks the abridgment of toil, for the procuring of food and of comfort, by its never-failing devices. The poet pours forth his song, because the thought is burning within him, and he must speak and give it utterance. Human passions, affections, interests, build up, and ever have built up, family relations. They all pursue their earthly course; they might pursue that same course if religion entered not at all into the human mind. But when

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the religious sentiment is excited, then the hope of immortality appears in strength and beauty and glory. Place man in the light of religious sentiment, and he sees beyond the dark portals of the grave. When the choral song of multitudes is swelling in adoration of the God and Father of all; when

> "Storied windows, richly dight,
> Shedding a dim, religious light,"

give solemnity to the perceptions of the senses; when philosophy speculates on the unfinished materials of character, the rudimentary marks which are borne by those whose existence here is prematurely terminated; when the spirit is in unison with the great harmonies of nature, and drinks in delight and instruction from every object of sight or sound, luxuriating, as it were, in the beauties of the fields, the woods, the blue heavens, or the boundless ocean; when meditation communes with its own heart upon its bed, and is still, and in the silence hears the low voice within whispering holy oracles; when bereavement stands by the yet uncovered grave, weeping over its blighted hopes,—then, and in all circumstances inducing similar states of emotion, exciting the religious sentiments, human nature feels that a future life is an undoubted reality; and when is human nature more to be trusted than under such circumstances?

Indeed, what is religion without this? It may be only a secondary idea; but does not the primal one of Deity, by close affinity, bring this in its train? Can man call God his Father without implying his own childhood, and, in that filial relation, his own future destiny? Does he not feel the truth of that saying, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"? Must he not have the conviction that "all live to Him"? Does he contemplate these grand relations only as things that are to pass away, like the other passing phenomena of this world of ours? When he says "My God," is it, as sometimes has been suggested, only with a sense of property? Is it not rather with that of relation, that of the filial condition, and in that of participation in the future parental eternity? In that unfinished melody of our hymn-book—"Art thou not from everlasting to everlasting, O God, mine Holy One? We shall not die,"—is there not a sequence of thought as close

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as in the most logical chain of causes and effects that was ever linked together? If religion were capable of existing in its proper strength and greatness without the immortality of man, it would become fainter as we approach the verge of our existence; it would grow less and less in the prospect of dissolution; it would partake of that oblivion which is spread over wealth and power, and so many other things by which man's passions and ambition are excited in their most active moments. Is this the fact? Is it not most directly the reverse? Is not the triumph of religion, the hope of immortality, always greater at such times? Is not the death-bed especially the scene, the peculiar scene, of the vigour of the religious sentiment, including this as one essential idea, though only a secondary one, of that religious sentiment? So it was rightly judged by him who sang that Hope would

> "Light her torch at Nature's funeral pile."

She lights it at the funeral pile of the individual, as well as at that of congregated nature.

> "Unfading Hope! when life's last embers burn,
> When soul to soul and dust to dust return,
> Heaven to thy charge resigns that awful hour,
> Oh, then thy kingdom comes, immortal Power!"

Let it stand, then, as the second great article of the religion of human nature. If we take it from the ground of logical deduction, it is not a lowering, but a raising of it; for we place it on the same footing with the existence and perfection of the Divinity. Let it stand as a fact inculcated by the very tendencies of our moral and intellectual being, and therefore anterior to, and paramount over, the thoughts and inventions which we devise to ourselves in the sport or the working of those faculties. There let it ever stand, bound within the covers of no sacred book—independent of tradition and legend—not resting upon the questionable testimony of historical evidence—unlinked from an association with preternatural wonders—needing the confirmation of no church or priesthood—neither affirming nor denying any divine mission—but resting and remaining, like the enduring pyramids, or rather like some mountain heaved up by Nature herself, to tower aloft and hold communion with the skies,—those skies

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which are the type of Divinity. "Love to God and love to man" was the summary of the stone tables of natural and Christian duty. There is a summary of the religion of Nature inscribed on the fleshly tables of the heart, and that summary is,—"The perfection of Divinity—the immortality of humanity."

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LECTURE IX.

The Moral Sense.

Conscience—the moral sense—the perception of right and wrong, of the fit and the unfit, of good and evil—this is generally evolved by the human constitution. We find it wherever we find humanity. The calculations of the utilitarian may produce a subsequent judgment upon actions; but this principle supersedes calculation by immediate perception, and gives, in many cases, the previous impulse. If morality or virtue be nothing more than the balance of external good,—if there be no need of an inner harmony of the powers and faculties of our nature with themselves, as well as with external objects,—then, indeed, morality may be resolved merely into calculation. But the constitution of the human being taken generally, nay even the individual constitution, must needs be an element without which all calculation is vitiated, as by it, very often, all such calculation is superseded.

The sturdiest utilitarian of modern times, Jeremy Bentham, has by implication conceded this, although generally overlooked in his writings, when he says that, "Supposing the game of push-pin give as much pleasure as the study of Homer's *Iliad*, then the game of push-pin is as good as the *Iliad* of Homer." That is to say, a mere idiosyncrasy, a childish idiosyncrasy, is equivalent to one of the greatest intellectual creations. The very possibility of its being made so by any constitution or tendencies of a human being shows the importance of that constitution and of those tendencies in every estimate of morals. For to them we must go; whatever the result may be, they are an element more important, more decisive, than all external and calculable result. It is within us that we find the source of judgment upon moral topics; it is there that we find the preponderating decision in behalf of the true, the good, the beautiful, the obligatory. A conscience, or

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moral sense, is general as human nature. Knowledge expands and elevates it; superstition may corrupt and debase it; but they find it there; they require this previous element, in order to institute their operations and influences, and exercise their agency over human life and character.

Virtue, then, is not merely something that is useful, something that is made out by a calculation of external advantages, or external disadvantages, resulting from its exercise; it is more than this—the true, the beautiful, the grand, the noble, and the ennobling.

All mankind have ever reverenced the good man; and the portraiture, by whomsoever drawn, and wheresoever drawn, and with all those diversities which may be the result of the manners of different times, and the degree of knowledge and cultivation, still presents the same essential features. The knowledge of morals was not revealed through Moses on Mount Sinai; it was not first made known by Christ on the shores of the Lake of Galilee. It preëxisted—the injunctions of Christ have been traced to more ancient writers, by whom they were recognised and taught to different nations. The Arabs knew what virtue and vice were before Allah spoke by the voice of Mahomet, and indited the Koran. It has been justly said that the Roman Lucretia, though she worshiped Venus, yet died for chastity. The savage mother boasts that her son never told a falsehood. In the remotest ages, in the darkest regions, we still find there is a perception of the true and the good, prior to all other things, acknowledged as something superior to all calculation, recognised promptly, and in which heart responds to heart, all the world over.

Religions find it, and too often pervert it. They appeal to the sense of duty, and they misinterpret the particulars of duty. They raise the ceremonial above the moral. They tell man there may be a deadlier sin in eating flesh on Fridays than in injuring his neighbour. They inculcate a virtue of factitious merits; they warn of factitious crimes. By different religions, the moral sense, the conscience, has been often blinded, perverted, rendered callous in some instances to evil, and in others unconscious of good. But still, superstition, at most, has only succeeded in partially defacing this divine image within humanity, in

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partially stifling this universal oracle, in which God speaks by the feelings of his rational creatures.

This moral sense has also always been a religious idea. It belongs to the class of thoughts and conceptions of which I am treating in these lectures. It is in affinity with the notions of God and of immortality. The same faculties of our minds are exercised upon it. These conceptions act and react upon this of virtue, strengthening and exalting one another. No religion has been without moral precepts. To enforce them have the world's sanctities been established. For their advancement, nominally at least, and to a certain extent in reality, have priests been consecrated, and temples built, and altars raised, and sacrifices offered, and ceremonies observed, and men have been baptised and buried with solemnity, and over life has been cast the sanction of a religious character and obligation. It is this sense of the superiority of moral good which has so strengthened the notions of reward and punishment, which has made them almost eclipse every other in the anticipations of futurity, which has believed in their realisation even in this life, and traced retribution here, as well as hereafter, first in a special providence, and then in heaven and hell. Guided by this principle has man sought to connect every thing therewith, and to regard all as subservient to the moral culture of mind and heart and character. Of course there have been diversities similar to those I have indicated in connection with other religious ideas. They have exhibited themselves in the temporary acknowledgment as virtues of certain prevalent vices. Men have endeavoured to idealise military glory, and other vanities, in the same way as in their conceptions of Divinity they have idealised a Mars or a Moloch. But still, the faith in the reality, the worth, and the enduring nature of moral good has remained firm and unshaken in man's heart.

And with this, the social principle—that strong and universal tendency of our nature—has allied itself. The notion of a Church has prevailed from the earliest periods to the present time—the notion, that is, of the affinity of good men, and the need of their associating or linking themselves together, in some way or other, for the promotion of that which they most esteem.

We see it existing in the Jewish nation. The nation

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and the Church were one—the people constituting a religious, as well as a political combination. But this did not permanently suffice. By the time of Christ we find something like a Church within this national Church. The discipline of the synagogue had established itself—there was a species of social moral tribunal, to which Christ refers as "the Church," taking cognisance of an offending brother. Then Christianity itself became identified with a Church, and has remained so, with the majority of its professors, to this day. And this had its origin in a yet earlier state of things. The peculiarity of the Mosaic dispensation was, that Moses rendered public and popular to the entire nation that which had been confined to a select few in Egypt. The mysteries there, in which persons were initiated with so many forms and such severity of trial, were but another phase of the same idea. They passed into Greece, long maintaining there a revered and sacred character in the popular mind. That great reformer Pythagoras organised his disciples on a similar principle. This has often been done through the intervention of nationality; and a corrupting influence has been exercised by that combination. The identity of Church and State ceased to be a fact, and then sprang up the fiction of the alliance of Church and State. But still mankind have acknowledged, under every form, the social principle in connection with the moral sense, and the moral sense as a religious idea.

This Churchism has, indeed, made sad havoc with it. For, as generally constituted, churches implied priests, and priests implied priestcraft, and priestcraft has often been rampant, seating itself in the very throne of God. Ethics have been filled with Church-made crimes and Church-made virtues. There has been in these theological bodies a manufactory of factitious merit; the devout observance of a routine of ceremony; making praises, prayers, and sacrifices, kneelings and gesticulations, more important than doing justice, and loving mercy, and walking humbly before God. The appropriation of wealth by Churches has been carried on—systematically carried on—at one time to such an extent, that, had not political and other interests interfered, the Church would have appropriated to itself the broad lands of every country, would have held all the

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property of Europe and of the world. Another Church-made virtue has been that of submission—"prostration of the understanding"—enforced first towards the priest, then to the written word, or to its exposition in a creed,—enforced as the first of all virtues; not allowing a man to call his thoughts or his soul his own; restraining all freedom of expression, of spoken or written language, and endeavouring to obliterate that liberty without which there is neither virtue, nor moral greatness, nor real religion in the world. For the slave soul can conceive of nothing better than a tyrant Deity.

Still, whatever the monstrous perversions that have been induced, the source from which they flow was pure; and its purity is sustained in permanence by a host of influences. The moral principle, the social principle, in their native loveliness remain. There is a safeguard for them in human nature; whilst man's moral and intellectual being are constituted as they are, that appreciation and that love and reverence must remain. The influences of nature are with them—its harmonies and beauties—they all tend to keep up accuracy of perception in good and evil, and the preference of the former over the latter. Kindred thoughts have ministered to them. Whatever relates to the spiritual and the invisible—to the enduring—these have all kept up man's estimate of goodness, and his value for its exercise. The memorials of the dead, of what they were and did and taught,—memorials preserved for their worth, from age to age,—these fulfil their mission, surrounding him who runs his earthly race as with a cloud of witnesses. And, in addition to all, he ever seeks the association of the like-minded, that they may strengthen one another in love and good works, that mutual help may lead on to mutual improvement, and eventually to their common enjoyment and progress.

Here, then, in the purity of the source, let us forget for a while the extent of the perversion that has been superinduced. Let us rejoice in its permanence, and that beneath the rank growth of superstition there still is this pure and beautiful product of human nature, flowering in the shade, but filling the air with its fragrance. In our path of life, let us not turn too hastily or with disgust from that which may seem deformed and offensive, which wounds, stings,

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poisons, and appears to usurp the soil. Push it aside, and that gently; for beneath it is blossoming that flower of truth and loveliness which is native to the human heart; which renews its being, maintains its beauty, and ever sheds abroad its blessed influences.

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LECTURE X.

Heaven.

The chief good—the highest condition of humanity—the final cause of its existence—what is it? where to be enjoyed? when and how attained? These are questions on which philosophy employed itself, in its most earnest speculations, in ages when philosophy best deserved that appellation. Blind ignorance gropes after a solution of these inquiries. Some, as Solomon, with royal means, have instituted an experimental pursuit of the chief good, trying, in succession, one thing after another, pronouncing all vanity, until they rested in the religious idea, which the world has been accustomed to take as the only solution within its reach of such questions; which, under the term Heaven, men have described in various ways, according to their tastes and aspirations, and which by that name we recognise as one of the religious ideas which have now been for some time the object of our consideration.

As a religious idea, the chief good has been generally held to combine in its elements purity, blessedness, communion with God; but indefinitely varied and modified—as all the religious ideas are varied and modified—by different forms of worship, by different modes of thought, by different habits of life. Accordingly, some have looked for their heaven above the clouds, environed with all the splendour of the stars; others in the central depths of the earth and the shady groves of Elysium. Some have filled it with sensuous delights of a grosser or more refined species; whilst these are rejected by such as have anticipated an exclusively intellectual and spiritual condition of existence. Some have anticipated a nearer approach to the Divinity than we possess here, but of the same kind—the contemplation of works full of grandeur, wisdom, and loveliness; others have expected to gaze even on the Divine essence itself; and others again have looked to the absorption of

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created spirits—their entire absorption, to the loss of individuality—into the universal and creative Spirit.

The purification by which the condition is attained has been similarly diversified. There has been the "metempsychosis," where the transmigration of the mind through different forms constituted a series of trials and a course of purification. There has been the "purgatory," in which some have believed; the "hades," as a temporary state of a more ancient time; the corrective "hell," on which one class has speculated; whilst another, looking to the trials and the course of things on earth as man's only moral discipline, have contrasted their future eternal heaven with a hell of equal eternity.

But, under all these varieties, in all their conceptions, we see human nature striving after the chief good, and calling it by that name of heaven, because it has adopted the thought as a religious idea, and the pursuit as a religious course of action—the spiritual life—the life of God in the soul of man.

And, thus looking beyond the present scene of existence for the full development of the human constitution to its grandest dignity and its most extensive enjoyment, what information has man derived from the specialties of religion,—what from the particular forms as distinguished from the universal essence of religion—the forms that have been set up, as it were, instead of that essence, and very frequently so as to hide it from man's contemplation? Who or what has given us more authentic information than that which we derive from the human mind and heart, from man's moral constitution? Who are the revealers of the unseen world? Under what right or title do any of them claim that appellation? Some profess to have heard the articulate voice of God himself, and to repeat its utterance in mortal ears. Others tell us, or it is said of them, that they abode in heaven, and came down to sojourn on earth, and made known the things belonging to their pristine condition. Others have been caught up to the "third heaven," or to the "seventh heaven," there to hear what was not to be heard in this lower world. Some have called the corpse from the grave to question it, and derive information of the unseen state. Others profess to have talked with ghosts, with spirits, with saints and

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angels, and to have received the communications of those who had passed through the great partition that divides the visible from the invisible world.

And what have they all told us? What specific article of information can we find, either in consecrated bodies of men or in sacred books? In the Veds, in the Koran, in the Bible, where can we lay our finger upon a distinct communication of some particularity of the unseen state, which is thus made a definite object of knowledge? Priests and bishops, inheriting the Holy Spirit of God, and transmitting it, as they tell us, from one generation to another of their ecclesiastical dignities,—what have they told us? what have they to tell us? We are but where we were, such professed communications notwithstanding; the veil remains unraised. In some particulars, indeed, where they have attempted to define, advancing science disproves the fallacy. However religions may have taught a local heaven, a heaven to which one might be rapt in a chariot of fire, and to which another might ascend through the clouds, astronomy and geology, in their firm march onward, dissipate the vision, and disprove the fallacy, and bring us back to the only sure guidance in these matters, the dictates and tendencies of our own moral being as compared with those of the great system of things around us. Were all professed descriptions of the invisible and future to perish from the earth, we should be as wise; the sources of wisdom—of real revelation—would remain, because they belong to our very being; just as if, were all the works on geology and botany to be consumed in one great conflagration, the eternal mountains would remain, constituted of the same strata; the great stone volume would contain the same legible lessons; and nature, with every returning spring, would again put forth its flowers and blossoms, and every autumn would bear its fruits. They would be renewed were the teachers of such sciences and their tuition to perish utterly. And so, were the specific forms of religion and professed revelations of futurity—of heaven and hell—to vanish also, man's nature would renew the real truth and wisdom; the hope of a better state of things than any he has yet enjoyed would spring eternal in his breast, and the great impulse and tendency of his being would be yet onwards to the full participation of that condition.

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And yet, with all this ignorance, how much tyranny has been perpetrated in the world through the assumption of a particular knowledge as to futurity! This power of heaven and hell has been as the golden sceptre and the thunderbolt in the hands of the priesthood. They have ruled the world; their slaves and creatures have been ready at their bidding to throw themselves, as the Hindoo would at the command of his Brahmin, beneath the chariot of any crushing Juggernaut. Europe can be hurled upon Asia in one vast mass, as it was in the time of the Crusaders; the world may be subdued, as it was by the Mahometans, animated by the prospect of the joys of their paradise, and the certainty of its inheritance by true believers and devout proselyters, though by fire and sword, to the religion of their prophet. What power there was in that ancient Popery, which placed its foot upon the neck of kings and emperors! And what a power was there not, again, in that Reformation which burst this vassalage, and liberated Europe, and bade its nations look up beyond the shrine at which they had worshiped, and behold their God! Heaven and hell have been the mighty power which has been thus wielded from age to age, and which is not merely evident in these broad characters of the history of mankind, but which penetrates into the innermost recesses of individual life. It subdues mind; it humbles intellect. The exclamation of Bishop Bramhall, "I dare not inquire!" has been sometimes ascribed to the effect of worldly motives and inducements. But it might not be so; for there have been multitudes within the Christian pale who dared not inquire, because they were taught that belief in certain dogmas was the passport to heaven, and that disbelief or scepticism was the passage to eternal reprobation for their souls. Mind has been conquered, and feeling has been conquered—friends have been alienated from friends—children cast off by their parents. Even the mother's heart has been taught to rest on a system which, like the Prayer-book of our Established Church, makes the salvation of infants conditional on their submission to the rite of baptism; or, at any rate, speaks of it as uncertain, passes it over in dubiety, unless they are baptised. Here is a system which grapples with, tramples upon, the strongest powers we know—the greatness of intellect, the

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tenderness of feeling. Such powers, resolvable into man's natural impulse for the chief good of his nature, have a foundation in truth, or they would not be powers. They are not wholly a fraud, or they would not be so powerful. There is a reality in them. If heaven—I use the appellation as that which has been commonly applied to the chief good when regarded as a religious idea—if heaven be indeed a dream, it is one of Nature's dreams, whose visions are prophecies.

The extent of human capability, compared with the limitation of the external world as the means of filling the capacity of enjoyment, indicates something more than is attained, or than can be attained, in this world and in this life. The affections, in their development, point onward to perpetuity; it is their very nature and impulse. The philanthropic dreams of a Utopia are the strivings after such good, not only for the individual, but for society. The universal conviction of mankind is, that there is a reality in the anticipation of some period to come, in some world or other, in some state or other, where man shall make more manifest approximations than he does here towards the realisation of that chief good for which he exists. The feeling extends even to the physical world; and we hear of a creation groaning and travailing in pain, and longing for deliverance—of heavens and earth destroyed, to make way for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

And how has imagination luxuriated in the contemplation! The affinity of this idea of heaven—of man in his best estate, with an enduring existence before him—has so laid hold, as it were, of the fondness of the human mind, that the imagination has gone rejoicingly to work to frame its brightest pictures, to erect its most brilliant palaces, to lavish all the splendour of its own colours and grace upon that future abode. It has been placed in gardens cultivated by Divinity itself, to enrich them with all that is delightful to the eye and to the taste. It has been located in shady groves, such as contemplation delights in—Elysian fields, where happy spirits wander, and hold delighted converse. Men have thought of "islands of the blest," in some remote and untraversed ocean, where the spirits of the just shall congregate, and, free from all that embittered their

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previous life, enjoy its full fruition. The planets in succession have been, as it were, seized upon, and appropriated to this purpose, with all their diversities and with all their brilliance; and whatever the wit and fancy of man could devise has been supplied, in order to render them more worthy of being the abodes of exalted creatures, who have sometimes been pictured as advancing from one world to another, until they reached the throne of Deity, erected in the great central sun, and there shedding forth its moral light and life, as well as the beams of material light, upon a surrounding and adoring universe. The rainbow pavilion, which some have reared high in the clouds, others have built above the stars, making them only the sparkling dust of its pavement; and there they have fancied themselves, in renovated and ever-during youth, possessing the plenitude of happy existence. There they have anticipated the great gathering of the wise and the good—of saints and martyrs in their religion, or of philosophers, poets, sages, patriots, in their wider views of human excellence—forming that august assembly, that glorious company, with which they hope to be permanently associated. There they have believed in the companionship of other beings of more majestic attributes; there they have fancied eternal strains like those of which, under another system, it was said that

"The Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing."

In like manner they have encompassed the throne of Jehovah with angels and archangels, who, untiring, breathed lays of spontaneous adoration; whilst from the world beyond was heard, even from the heavens and the earth, in all their extent, the chorus of redeemed intelligences. Thus has imagination shown its fondness for the theme—its delight in an idea which that very delight intimates must have affinity with our nature, must be a natural and genuine product of our intellectual and moral constitution.

Nor has it been only the theme of imagination. It has been a homely delight and strength to millions in all generations. They have clung to it for support in the time of temptation; it has kept them firm in trials which minds such as theirs might have been unable to meet

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by contemplations that yet had their power on the poet and the philosopher. It has nerved the confessor and the martyr for his endurance. Of the flames in which men have perished for their faith it has made a halo of enduring brightness. It has cheered and glorified the quiet and secluded death-bed of the humble and unobtrusive. With the exile it has gone in all his wanderings, causing him to feel, on remotest ocean, or languishing in the wilderness, that this hope, like the blue sky, was over all; deferred by no distance, changed by no circumstances. The philanthropic and devoted man has been enabled to bear the bitterness of the disappointment which so often befalls those who would deliver their fellow-creatures, but find that, by some strange perversity, mankind is blind to its own good, and will not yet accept of its own deliverance. The hope, the expectation, has gone with multitudes from the cradle to the grave. It has been a reality to them in all the changes and chances of life: a reality, of which nothing could destroy the persuasion, the strong presumption, in their souls, and which has adapted its voice to their circumstances. Laying hold of the paternal character of Deity, and pressing onward to the bounties pledged to us, as it were, by that paternal character, they have looked up in the strength of hope, and exclaimed: "In my Father's house are many mansions;" and, in the bitterness of privation, when the same light that had gilded the abodes of active life falls upon the rank grass of the recent grave, they have been enabled to say in resignation: "Father, not my will, but thine be done."

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LECTURE XI.

The Religion of Humanity.

Through ten successive lectures I have now endeavoured to illustrate what I term the religious ideas,—first, those associated with the conception of Deity; and then, those associated with our notions of humanity. Sundry of the secondary as well as of the primary religious ideas, regarded as the natural product of the human constitution, have thus passed before us. More might have been added,—more of the secondary class with similar claims; but I think enough has been said to make my own conception intelligible, and to stimulate the thoughts of those who are disposed to pursue such a train of meditation. I therefore dismiss these two divisions of the subject, and proceed now to some general considerations on this view of religion taken as a whole, and its bearing on several questions of great importance and interest.

If the views which have been advanced are sound, it is plain that there is a Religion of Humanity,—a religion which belongs to human nature; which is not the religion of the western world or of the eastern world, of the modern world or of the ancient world, or exclusively perhaps of this world at all; but it may be of all worlds,—a religion which does not descend to have an earthly metropolis, whether it be Rome, Jerusalem, or Mecca,—a religion which is not bound up within the covers of a book, be it the Veds, the Koran, or the Bible,—a religion which is not the property of the white race or of the black race; not the religion of Europe or of Hindostan, of Greece or of Persia, of Palestine or of Egypt,—a religion which existed before Moses reformed that of Egypt, and has existed since Luther reformed that of Europe,—a religion which is not subordinated to the influences of climate; which does not rise or disappear with the attainment by mankind of a different stage, a more advanced stage, of civilisation; which is the same permanently—continues as human nature continues; which

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is to be found wherever man is found—common as sense and reason, thought and feeling, mind and heart; and which, as it refers itself back to the earliest ages of history, so will not grow dim with age, nor fade in years through the coming generations.

The constitution of human nature,—this is the origin and the test of moral truth. It is allowed to be so in other things besides theology by the best teachers of ethics. It is the origin and the test of all moral conceptions. They rise from within, and not from without; they are in us and of us, and not externally or artificially superinduced. They grow like the native products of the soil. Human nature is that which proves axioms,—that to which we refer for intuition instead of induction; to which we look for propositions that shall bring their own evidence. A religion thus arising accommodates itself to humanity in all its phases. It may be dark in the ignorant, but it is luminous in the intelligent; it is greatest in the greatest minds and characters; it is loveliest in the loveliest minds and characters. It is never exceeded by their thoughts and feelings, as all positive religions are. You cannot proceed till you come to some tenet at which the moral sense stands rebuked, or which must be rebuked by the moral sense. Rooted thus deep within us, it is free from the collisions which ever attend specific theologies. It deals not in antagonisms. Its tendency, indeed, is to put down all antagonisms, and to make us feel at one with nature, with God, and with humanity.

This religion has its revelations; and they are the only truths worthy to be called revelations. The religious ideas which belong to the human constitution, and are traceable to its dictates, as surrounded by the great objects of nature, —these are self-luminous, self-proving; their evidence is not to be sought for without, like the evidence of historical fact, where you have to weigh the testimony of witnesses, and endeavour to hold with an even hand the balance of probabilities; where you have to grope through a mass of impertinent matter, and then estimate with minute accuracy the few grains of proof that can be discovered. These great moral and religious ideas prove themselves by their very existence and nature; they grow and shine as suns grow and shine, by the condensation of the great nebulæ. They

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shed their light upon surrounding worlds, making them luminous with reflected lustre; they prepare for humanity a different world of existence,—a spiritual world, unfolded to us by the inward sense, as the external world is created anew to every human being by the influence of the outward senses. They live and reign in the mind; and, as I have said, they alone deserve the name of revelation. For when one professes to bring a revelation from heaven, a discovery of the invisible, a promulgation of momentous truth otherwise unknown, and incapable of being known, what mockery, or worse than mockery, is it which holds out to us only a book in a dead language,—a book whose discoveries, so called, are marked in unknown characters; where we must have recourse to translation, and then again have recourse to interpretation, subject to all the liabilities to mistake and perversion which occur in these processes. It is a revelation, say some, that the Deity said in ancient Hebrew to Moses, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children." Here, what room is there not for doubt! What was meant by each term? what by the entire proposition? What was jealousy, and what Deity, in the conception of the writer; and what are they to our minds? Have we the true meaning and rendering of the words? Were they designed for a limited application, or for a universal one? Were they of temporary force and truth, or eternal? Here are clouds upon clouds, deepening the darkness till it is palpable as that of Egypt.

The thoughts that rise within our own minds have nothing of this ambiguity. Words, mere words, cannot be a revelation of such objects as those on which religion is conversant. They cannot convey to us our best and purest, our highest and noblest, conceptions of an infinite God, or of an immortal principle in man. This must spring up within us, and of us, and must present itself as part of the system of things in which we live,—a portion of nature, for it does thus rise and grow. The very savage feels influxes, as it were, of these thoughts, from pure nature springing up in a mind that is purely disposed, and calling forth from its recesses the latent conceptions which lie there. It belongs to the system of nature, like the products of the soil, or like the stars of the firmament, or like the principle of gravita-

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tion that binds planets and suns and worlds and constellations together into harmonious unity. Nor can it perish while nature endures.

There is, then, a religion of humanity. Humanity adores a God—humanity hopes for a futurity. Idealised and personified perfection and progress—these are its primary, its essential doctrines,—if doctrines they may be called,—leading us to conceive of power and wisdom, of majesty and goodness, of law and order, of beneficent purpose and infallible execution. Humanity, with its hopes and its fears, its loves and its joys; humanity evolving its moral perceptions of the difference between right and wrong, feeling the beauty and power which there is in the one and not in the other; humanity calling to its aid the social principle, to cheer and encourage the pilgrim in his course, looking abroad on nature as a Father's work; cultivating even arduous virtues because they appear congruous with the Divine Father's plans, and thus accomplishing the great ends of being,—such is religion—simple, pure, and undefiled. And it fulfils the offices and functions of religion as no positive or specific system can fulfil them. It generates piety, enforces morality, proffers consolation. A piety not, indeed, venting itself in forms altogether unmeaning, or darkly emblematical of something ill-understood—not a piety of grovelling apprehensions and servile deprecations; but springing from a heart at one with the true, the beautiful, and the lovely around it,—a heart consenting to the will and works of Deity,—a heart sympathising in that which is joyous therein, and offering its continuous tribute of thankfulness; feeling that if it has sometimes an unknown God, that is, a God but partially understood, it can never have a God limited or thwarted, partial in his love for his creatures, or baffled in the graciousness of his providence. It elevates morality, raising our whole nature, and, as it were, purifying the moral taste within us, until deviation from its dictates is as abhorrent as discords to the musical ear, or as loathsomeness to those who have cultivated refinement of manners and of thought. And repentance—repentance is not, with it, the base principle that would bargain for the crimes and offences that are past, that would purchase heaven by a treaty of self-punishment. Repentance, with it, is the opening of the heart to the mild

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and benignant influences of naturè—an impatience of being any longer a discordant atom in that great system of things —a longing to be entirely at one with the life that is, and the life that is manifesting itself in progressive development.

This, I apprehend, is the soul of all peculiar systems of religion. It is in them, though obscured, though perverted. It is in them, whatever doctrines they may set up as peculiar and essential doctrines, and however, in their propagation of such dogmas, they may disregard these primary elements. True, indeed, they may tell us, that without believing this or that dogma man cannot be saved. But if salvation means the freedom of the soul from the fetters of vice and ignorance,—if it means the gradually emancipating power of the human mind, as resulting from our constitution,—if it means this, salvation has been enjoyed by people of every tribe and of every country. It cannot be confined to the believers of any system, however exclusive its pretensions. Wherever we find the symptoms of a true, of a sincere, of a holy, of an aspiring and beneficent piety, there is religion in its practical form. We find them amongst Christians of the present day; we trace them in the records of those patriarchs who lived in the sternness of primeval Judaism, before Christianity, with its peculiarities, was made known to the world; we find them in idolaters, who seem sunk below the specific systems most received in the world; and in the philosopher who believes that he rises above them. Jew and Greek, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, exhibit them. Search the spiritual annals of the world, and, imperfectly as they are preserved, we find that piety has existed every where.

> "We cannot go
> Where universal love not smiles around"

in nature; nor can we go amongst the various demarcations of humanity, where the traces of piety and love are not to be discerned. That which is common cannot spring from peculiar and exclusive causes; we trace it to the common and universal cause,—we trace it to the great cause and source of all moral thought—to the human constitution; and, acting on that, in spite of the diversities of secondary and specific ideas, we see a common character

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given to the piety and the goodness of the most pious and the best in all countries and through all ages.

That which is the religion of humanity is, therefore, a progressive religion. No positive system is progressive; and only takes the appearance of being so, because improved and enlightened interpretations are affixed to words that originally bore a low and barbarous meaning. Hence, in all religions, corruptions are complained of. They have their sacred books, full of all wisdom; but still the Hindoos complain that their purest and brightest volumes of sacred lore have been forgotten, or obscured and perverted. In Mahometanism, sects and interpretations have arisen; and with all the power of an intellect which has made some advances, though not commensurate with those of the more improving nations of the world, there still is a necessity for affixing a more pure and spiritual interpretation to sundry passages than at first they bore.

The Christian world is full of complaints of the corruptions of Christianity; and thus must it ever be with the attempt to lock up all divine truth within the compass of certain written words. It is a warfare against the great and vital principles of human nature. Hence these specific religions are always afraid of science; for they all involve the notion that where law is, Deity is not—that God works preternaturally, and not naturally. The extension of the domain of law is to them a narrowing of the sphere of religion. In proportion as events are ascertained to coincide perfectly with the course and order determined by some natural principle, in that very proportion there seems to them to be less sphere for their piety, for their admiration, for their religion. Geology has deprived Christianity of some doctrines, astronomy of others. The one has incontestably refuted the notion that death came into the world in consequence of the transgression of Adam; the other has demolished the old picture of a local heaven. And so, with these religionists, the effect of advancing science is to drive religion backward, and to expel their God from the world of his own creation.

It cannot be thus with the true religion of humanity. As man advances, it must advance also; as he gains more knowledge, it rises more brightly upon his mind, and beams through a clearer atmosphere. As his feelings ex-

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pand towards other beings, as his love becomes larger and wider, and flows in a stronger tide, in that he sees its operation within himself, as a great natural principle, evolving a moral world as it has evolved a material world. He has no fear that as a discovery may be made in physics, a doctrine in theology must be abandoned; all within him stands the more firm and clear for these discoveries; and although to the bounded vision there must always be mysteries in the plan and works of the Infinite, as well as in himself, yet, in spite of these, he has that enlightened reliance which arises from distinct perception, from a satisfaction with the course and order of things, so far as he can trace it, and from marking its tendency as always bearing the same character, and moving onward to the same blessed results. He has faith.

His religion therefore remains, whilst others vanish; it increases and expands, whilst others fade and disappear. He can look around on the fruits of discovery, on the triumphs of science, with perfect satisfaction. He sees that they are all subordinate to the eventual development, in a higher degree, of the real religion of human nature.

Come, then, all sciences, with your discoveries, however remote, however stupendous, however contrasted with past philosophies and systems,—come, then, all sciences, and bring your tribute of homage to that religion which is the soul of all, and join with the loveliness and poetry of the world, making the same offering, and uniting in the same worship. Man, perplexed and bewildered by positive systems,—enslaved, entangled, and rendered wretched by dogmas,—in this pure light of science and of love, feels the breaking upon him of a brighter day; he looks up, and he hails the dawn with songs of gratitude and gladness.

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LECTURE XII.

Christianity.

All religions, Christianity included, will appear in a light different from that in which they are commonly regarded, if it be indeed the fact, as I have endeavoured to show in these lectures, that there is a religion of humanity, universal, everlasting, evolving itself from the human constitution, and belonging to human nature. If this be so, we shall no longer look at religions as founded on missions or revelations, real or pretended, but perceive that there was a prior impulse, something independent of, preëxistent to, and more powerful than, all these missions and revelations, which necessitated the latent acknowledgment at least, if not the avowal, of certain general principles and feelings of piety and morality. The acknowledged true and just and sound dictates or precepts, which are to be found, in a greater or less degree, in all specific forms of religion, will no longer seem to us merely incidental: they will not appear as the accidental adjuncts of what is usually held forth as the peculiarity of such religion in its origin or character, but in them we shall see its real essence, however obscured by the forms or pretensions with which it may have been overlaid.

Hence, in all religions there will be occasion for discriminating between that which belongs to the true and the universal,—that which is really a portion, taken possession of and applied by that specific form of religion, of the great universal religion of the human family,—and that which is the result only of fraud, of superstition, of enthusiasm, or of whatever influences—perhaps of a different and far purer character—may have been at work. While we may trace some parts of these specific forms of religion to the influence of prophets and priests, of books or miracles, we shall trace other portions to the varied influences of nature; and the great and essential elements of all religions we shall assign to the human constitution itself.

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One result of this view of religion is, that it denies to all specific forms the exclusiveness which most of them claim. However ancient their origin, however wide their dominion, whatever the lustre of their professors or their priesthoods, it will not allow that any of them are exclusively the one true religion. It claims that in its degree for all; it denies the monopoly of it to any form whatever, even to those which seem to have the most right to be exclusive, as they claim a local God. Athens with its Minerva, or Judæa with its Jehovah, might have its peculiar Deity; but the religion of humanity shows us elements of a more extensive nature, elements of the universal, which mingle with all, and the nature and tendency of which is to overrule all. Let them have their defects or excellences, their truths or falsehoods, their real piety or their gross superstition, their foundation in reason or their claim to the preternatural, it says to all, that in these dictates of our being is religion,—religion universal and everlasting: this is the heart of their hearts, the religion of all religions.

Christianity is no exception to this rule. If we would be correct in our conceptions of Christianity, we should endeavour not to look at it from our own limited and restricted position, but rather to regard it as citizens of the world, as partakers of the common human nature. For what is there in Christianity, in its claims to the examination of those trained under a different system, of which other systems do not possess something in relation to us? What is the Christianity of any here? The Christianity of the minority, probably, of our own country. What is the Christianity of our own country but the religion of a minority in relation to Christendom? and what is Christendom itself but a minority of the human race, most largely outnumbered, not only by the aggregate of other religions, but by the Mahometan religion alone? What can we say which may not be said in return? Do we claim an ancient origin?—other religions have an origin more ancient. Are miracles claimed for Christianity?—other religions have their miracles, as wonderful,—more wonderful, more numerous; specific forms of Christianity have theirs; and the Roman-Catholic Church boasts of their continuance even down to the present day. Do we refer to the morality

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of Christianity?—other religions have the self-same moral principles, and we find in them the self-same spirit of piety. Hence we should not wonder that people cannot be induced very easily to go into the technical evidence of the authenticity of the scripture history, and the various books of scripture. We need not wonder at the failure of the great array of missionary operation. They fall back, as Christians in Europe fall back, on their numbers, the antiquity of their religion, its general reception amongst them, the wonders by which it has been authenticated, and the providential interpositions of their Divine Being, which they believe to have been matters of their own experience.

Hence the difference between religion and the arts. Let us make a useful invention, and it spreads among other nations. The Hindoos are learning the art of cleaning their cotton, so as to bring it into more general use; Constantinople has its printing-presses at work, and a newspaper is published there; and Grand Cairo has buildings and gardens lighted with gas. Our arts spread, but not our doctrines; and that, I apprehend, is because we are accustomed to give too exclusive a character to that peculiar modification of the common religion of which we make profession. The most striking peculiarity of Christianity is this, that it is the religion of the predominant races in the world; of those in whom both intellectual power and industrial energy have been the most largely developed. It is the religion of the conquering and colonising races; it is the religion of the reflective, the inventive, the generally progressive races. Whether this be by an affinity with the peculiarities of their constitution, or whether its own influences upon them have not had their share in such a development, is another question. The amount of action and reaction it may be very difficult to estimate in such a case; but there stands the broad fact, that Christianity is the religion of the grandest portion of the earth's inhabitants, and of those who, if they do not exclusively possess the world, yet bid fair to subdue and to govern the rest of mankind.

But still, this falls short of the character of universality and of perpetuity which belongs to the religion of humanity, —belongs to that religion which enters into all religions. For what is the history of Christianity? It is the history, not of the simply spiritual and unchanging, but the history

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of change and of accommodation. From its origin in Judæa, the records of Christianity are the records of a series of modifications,—modifications arising out of the changing condition of the world, or the changed character of those by whom the religion was professed. In Judæa, for instance, it lacked organisation; converts were made individually; their church association or church government was of the simplest kind, rising out of the connection of the Jews together religiously, by their voluntary attendance on synagogue teaching, or copied from the establishment of the Essenes. Christians were comparatively isolated. The keen mind of the apostle Paul saw this, and he introduced organisation. He not merely made churches more strict and exclusive bodies, but he ordained bishops and elders over them; he, as it were, regimented and banded them in their several localities and provinces, and was himself the great travelling primate of the religion which he did so much to establish in the world. Time rolled on; Christianity prevailed extensively in the Roman empire; something else was needed,—some other modification in its original form, besides the organisation with which the apostle Paul had started. More of appearance, more of grandeur and of pomp, was requisite for the religion of the masterly Romans than had sufficed for the religion of the despised and oppressed tribe of people that abode in Jewry. Then came the season of pomp; then worship grew into magnificent ceremonial; then the commemoration of Christ was the offering of high mass, with its imposing forms; then were rich robes and vestments and altars and temples of architectural grandeur made subservient to Christian worship. We have these forms, this splendour of service, in the initiatory condition of the Roman-Catholic Church. But this did not suffice without another modification that was speedily to follow. For the then circumstances of the world there was too much isolation and separation in Christian societies,—too much of independence in congregations or dioceses, if not of peculiarities of thought in individuals. More unity was necessary. The scattered elements of the Church were cemented together; the great pile rose tapering towards the skies like the spire of a cathedral; the whole was bound together in its oneness by the power of the Roman pontiff; and the pope donned his triple crown.

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As European intellect unfolded itself, as it was stimulated to thought, meditation, and inquiry, this system was found insufficient for its wants. More was needed of freedom, more of spirituality, more of simplicity, more of the certainty of a written word to appeal to, so far superior to that of the spoken words of the priest. The Reformation was necessary, and Luther rose. And how has it been since Luther's time? Is there no modification now obviously in progress? Has not science within the last three centuries been making its most brilliant discoveries? Have we not had the telescope and the microscope brought in aid of our bodily senses? Has not man penetrated into the bowels of the mountains and the caverns of the earth, and read in characters of stone the history of the past revolutions of the globe? Is not science continually modifying some doctrine or other? Have not tenets once universally received, and supported by scripture,—as those of witchcraft, of demoniacs, of a local heaven, of the recent creation of the world, of the introduction of death after the formation of man,—have not these, one after another, been shaken to their very foundations by the discoveries of science? Christianity teems with a new birth, and must accommodate itself to the spirit of the age—must undergo another modification, compelled to it by the advance of scientific knowledge. But all this is the history of change, and not of unchangeableness; it is the history of modification, and not of something essentially enduring in its nature and universal in its application.

Nor let it be said, in reply to this view, that the scriptures have remained unchanged through all this. What are the scriptures themselves but the record of a similar series of changes which took place before their completion? Trace their record of thought, of doctrine, of Deity, of devotion, of human nature and duty, from Genesis to Revelation, and you see as marked a succession of modifications and changes before the last verse of the Apocalypse was penned as you see after it. The scriptures do not draw a line between the changing and the unchanging; they record the last of one series of modifications, and immediately there begins another series of modifications. The Jehovah of the ancient Jews was not the God and Father of Christ; the change was as marked and distinct as any modern views

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of Christianity can be from those that were generally entertained in early times. We trace in all this the record of modifications; all of them, it may be, in connection with the universal principles that constitute the religion of humanity; but that connection also claimed by, and with justice assigned to, other religions which humanity has believed and professed.

The universal and enduring are in Christianity; and, allowing that they exist in all religions, the result of a complete and fair examination will be, I apprehend, that they exist more truthfully and efficiently in Christianity than in any other of these specific forms. We find them in its devotion. How sublime are the delineations of the Deity by the old prophet-bards of Judæa! How magnificent their exaltation of the power of God over human imaginations and devices! How grand the theology of the Old Testament! How benignant the theology of the New Testament! What can the heart know of piety that is indisposed to adore the Lord God with Isaiah, to trust the heavenly Father of Christ? This cannot change while the world shall last. As long as the stars shine in their brightness and roll in their orbits, it will be felt that we may worthily and devoutly use the language of the Jewish psalmist, and affirm that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Look at the morality of Christ; how heart-searching; how pure from conventionalism; how clear and true and strong; how simple his maxims, how easily applicable; and how complete his summary of human duty and human good, in loving the Lord our God with our heart and soul, our mind and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves!

These, then, are things eternal enshrined in Christianity. No storm can shake them; they can be superseded by no discovery in science. The moral pictures of the scriptures are everlasting, be they historical truth or be they fancy-work; let them be the narratives of the literal chronicler, or let them be parables, still there they are; and such characters as those of Joseph, of Moses, of Caleb, of Ruth, of the Good Samaritan, of the zealous and energetic apostle Paul, will remain through all time, unchanging in their worth and in their power as moral influences. They are paintings whose colour no time can obliterate, no acci-

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dent impair; which are never obscure in their meaning, nor feeble in their application.

These, and together with these the maxims and precepts founded on a deep observance of the heart of man,—the readings, clear and distinct, of that law which was written, not upon tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart,—dictates of truth, and thoughts which cannot pass away,—legends which in their very wildness have a force and beauty that charms the mind,—these are all of the enduring, these will last. And preëminent above them all, the character of him, the Son of God, the crucified one for man's salvation, so full of gentleness and tenderness, so rich in compassion, so prompt to forgiveness, and so submissive in agony; so confiding in God, in humanity, and in futurity,—that remains, the soul of all, Christianity incarnate and yet unchanging. These, then, are the enduring, the universal. They speak for themselves; they appeal for their proofs, not to the musty records of dark ages, not to verbal criticisms on Greek or Hebrew—but they appeal to our own moral sense, to our own elementary perceptions; they commend themselves there, and there they command full and lasting admiration.

But this does not extend to the records; it does not extend to the discrepancies in the narratives of the biographers of Christ. This does not reconcile their contradictions, nor make us capable of at once believing contradictory statements. This does not redeem the fact that much that was put on record was evidently only obtained by the writer from hearsay—from distant and indistinct report. This does not change the date of these compositions, nor overcome the critical probabilities that they did not assume their present form before the middle of the second century. This does not obliterate the manifest fact that there were prior documents, of which all made use, and which, apparently, are for ever lost to the world. This does not blind us to the prejudices or passions of the writers, to their belief in possession, and various other notions which knowledge has banished from the world, never to return. This does not establish legend and mythos as historical fact, nor make us admit that to have been transacted on the globe which is clearly only the reflex of a mind imbued with certain previous notions of the cha-

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racter and the destiny of the Messiah, for whom the Jewish nation was looking in anxious expectation. All these things are left untouched by our frank and full confession, that the universal and the eternal are nevertheless enshrined in Christianity and in the personal character of Jesus Christ. The originality of that character, above the power of invention, is good for the reality of the character itself, and it is good for nothing more. It does not uphold the various adjuncts which have accompanied it down to our time. The history of the scriptures must be tried, like other histories, by those principles of criticism which, developed in a comparatively recent time, yet enable the studious of our own day to know more of the real history of ancient nations—more of the Romans or the Greeks—than the Greeks and Romans did themselves of their own forefathers, or of the previous triumphs and disasters of their people. By such principles of criticism must it be tried, and the true separated from the false, the probable from the wholly incredible. This does not uphold the preternatural. Scripture miracles must be tried like any other miracles,—like those of the Romish saints,—like those of the Egyptian priests, some of which the scripture records, and records as having been actual transformations,—or like those of any other people, claiming thus to prop up the religious notions which they inculcate. This does not uphold mere legend or theory; descriptions of the creation of the world, of which no one could tell as a witness, but about which men were so prone to theorise; which were always thé beginning of their records, of the annals of their country, and which modern discovery has altogether superseded. In short, of all the adjuncts, it is clear that they must stand or fall by their own proved reality, or by their want of such proof. And in their evanescence there will be nothing to fear; for in whatever renders Christianity most credible and admirable, notwithstanding all the deductions that can be made from it; in the selections which might be formed either by sound criticism, or artistical feeling, or moral principle, seeking for illustration and recommendation; in all these, which would still remain, there will be enough to constitute the Bible the most valuable of books; there will be enough to render it worthy of public and reverential reading and of private study. There will be enough to recom-

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mend it as the companion of the meditative man, when he goes forth in the fields "to meditate at eventide." There will be enough to make it the worthy source of inspiration to the artist in his grand conceptions; enough to recommend it to the poet for his theme, singing it in such strains as those of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*, and his sublime *Ode on the Nativity*.

But in these matters it will become us to distinguish. Many do not apply the name of Christianity to that which is permanent and universal, so much as to that which is only a modification—which is only the temporary and the accidental. The application of a name is only a struggle about a word; the difference between the enduring and the transitory, between the universal and the limited,—this is a difference which concerns us all. With the same boldness that Paul called the institutions of Judaism "beggarly elements," and cast them off, while he professed to retain their enduring spirit,—in that same way, if he so pleases, may the discriminator as to the varied contents of the scriptures reject their accidental and temporary matter, whilst he prizes all the more their permanent and enduring principles. And let us hope that human thought, in the profession of our form of religion, and in the many other forms that prevail in the world, may make the same divarication,—may, in the same way, separate adjuncts from principles; and thus, free and pure, devout and elevated thought, in all religions and in all nations, will verge towards a oneness in the mode in which Deity is spoken of and honoured, and in which man sees his rights and his duties as a member of the lasting brotherhood in which he is bound by creating power. And for ourselves, let us prize that which is worthiest to be prized,—that which lasts, not that which perishes. Let us comparatively disregard what has only a failing evidence, which grows weaker and weaker with the lapse of generations and centuries, and cling to that which has the ever-renewed evidence of the tendencies of human nature and the human constitution. Let us comparatively disregard that which relates to outer form and ceremony, and makes technical worship and technical duties, or creates artificial sins, and cling to that which consults human nature as the source of moral thought—as that which religion is designed to ele-

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vate, in its spirituality and its affections, instead of lowering it to the condition of a gesticulating slave. Let us comparatively disregard that which is exclusive and arrogant in its pretensions, which marks out the precise nature of heaven and the conditions of salvation, and rests every thing on verbal authority, and cling to that which appeals only to reason, love, and hope, and, relying on God and futurity, is content to await their own revelation of their own nature and duration. Let us comparatively disregard that which has been the source of anathemas, of wars, of persecutions, and cling to that which raises the song of angels, the song of universal humanity: "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth, good will amongst men."

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LECTURE XIII.

Political Establishment.

The religion of humanity needs no state patronage. It requires not, either for its springing up in the individual or for its progress in society, the agency of power or of wealth. In fact, its own existence is prior to that of the state. It flows from the same principles in our constitution by which men are prompted not to dwell in solitude, but to form themselves into communities. It is one of what we call the leading instincts of our nature, as the formation of society is another. If it be, as I have endeavoured to show in these lectures, the natural and general result of certain principles of our being, then we may be certain of its existence, even though order, and society, and law, and institutions, and governments, had not themselves been called into existence. And it is self-renewing: it springs up again, like the spontaneous products of the soil, with every renewed development of the human constitution. It needs not be in any degree traditional. It revives with reviving humanity; it is renewed with renewing humanity. It is above and beyond all pretence of being a creature of the state, supported by the state, dependent upon the state, or under the control of the state. If a ruler, in the plenitude of his kindness as well as of his power, says to himself,—"Will my subjects be religious? How can I make my subjects religious?"—the reply to his solicitude is by another question,—"Are your subjects human beings? If they are, let them alone, and they will grow religious; and if you want to promote religion in them, do it by promoting the development of their human nature."

Moses, and Lycurgus, and Numa, and those other great men whose images we perceive through the long vista of history and the twilight of early ages, still closing the perspective as the founders of states and nations,—they generally—universally, it may perhaps be said—combined religion and law. They endeavoured to fashion by their

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principles the communities which they erected; but they were impelled to do so by the very universality, which has been shown, of the religious ideas. They could not overlook them; they could not ignore the existence of such a power in human nature; they consulted it,—sometimes only adverting to notions and practices already received and current as religions amongst those for whom they legislated; at other times, themselves speaking in the divine name, and as invested with divine authority. True, their religion, like their institutions, was frequently somewhat uncouth. No wonder that it should have been so in the infancy of society; theirs was but the rough hewing of states, to receive their future polish in the progress of knowledge and of civilisation. But, so far as they did homage to human nature and its tendencies, and in these to religion, we look to them as witnesses of the great fact of the universality of these principles. True, they often went beyond them. They endeavoured to embody, not only religion itself, but some specific form of religion, in their institutions. And when they did so, and so far as they did so, what was the consequence? While that specific form remained the unquestioned belief of the state they had founded, all things went on smoothly; but it was faith, not establishment, that gave the power to religion in that phase, in that peculiar mode of its embodiment. Just in proportion as the religion thus held up and identified with civil society was specific—in the very extent and degree in which it was specific—the more certainly and the more rapidly came the critical period—the period of doubt, of heresy, and of denial. This happened to them all: and then arose the alternative of religious liberty or religious persecution—of allowing human thought in the individual its free course, or of restraining it by pains and penalties; —the alternative of freedom or persecution—persecution which, to be effectual, must go the length of extermination. These have been followed, in later times, by that mongrel medium called toleration, which is simply another name for modified persecution; for persecution of a gentler kind, indeed, but still partaking of the same malignant essence; persecution receding, it may be—and so we bestow on it a name less harsh than on the same thing when it is advancing—but still persecution, even to the extent to which it

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tolerates; because toleration is the assumption by one man or set of men of superiority over another—the assumption of truth and the imputation of error.

An established religion has always been religion in some specific form or other; founded on some mission—appealing to some book—embodied in some forms, creeds, or ceremonies. Established religions have been specific forms from the very nature of the case. For when you make a religion according to law, it must consist in things of which law can take cognisance; it must have its outward profession and prescribed ceremonial; it must have articles, prayers, forms; it must have that which man can command of man, and see that the command is complied with. And what is the tendency of this—what the inevitable tendency, but to take all life out of the particular form of religion so established; to intermix the basest motives with the noblest; to bring in the desire of worldly pomp and worldly possessions, and to endeavour to fuse them into one with what relates to the growth of the human spirit, its communion with the Father of spirits, and the advance of mankind in all that most assimilates their nature to the divine? All such establishments must hinder and oppress inward religion; because pure religion may exist in some other specific form than that which the legislature or the ruler has taken under his especial patronage; or it may exist, and often has existed, without particular regard to any such forms. It is then proscribed, denounced; it bears the marks of what those who follow implicitly the dictates of the law deem heresy, or infidelity, or atheism—exciting in them sensations which no human being ought to excite in any other, on any account whatsoever. It introduces mental chicanery; the constant attempt to prove that words bear a meaning which it is plain they were not intended to bear by those who originally used them. And, in our own country, what a world of casuistry, of word-mongering, of juggling with the understanding, of wresting words from their plainest meaning, scope, and tendency, has there been, in order to show that the creed of the individual was in conformity with the creed of his church, or the creed of his church in conformity with the creed of the scriptures! Hence bickerings and strife, hence inequalities in society, the raising up of one class,

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and the depression of another; and hence the longest train of human evils that can perhaps be traced to any one cause operating on the condition and prospects of mankind.

For what is the language of experience as to these attempts, what their unvarying history? Look at them from the world's beginning to the present time: you see the same vicious circle ever fulfilled; you find every where an invasion of rights. The establishment of a specific form of religion cannot be found, in any one instance, in harmony with an entire equality of civil rights, that equality which members of human society have a right to claim from the governments under which they live. A priesthood has almost always been the enemy of public liberty. Philosophical historians trace the connection between different forms of religion and of government, discriminating them by this very circumstance, and showing, either that in proportion as governments grow despotic there are modes of religion on which they look with peculiar favour, or else that there are modes of religion which tend to make governments more despotic than they would otherwise become. The world's peace—what has broken it like established religions? What has made enemies of those that belonged to the same household, and should have been brethren? What has extended animosity, as it were, from this world to the next, and made the Deity a party to human antagonisms, and infinity and eternity the scene and the extent of their full gratification? The peaceful current of life, in its most secluded scenes and with its most unobtrusive tendencies, has thus been dashed with bitterness. As affects different nations, their several religions have mingled largely with the causes of war, the excitements to war, and the honours rendered to warlike exploits; and sometimes the contagion has spread from nation to nation, until the whole world seemed to be only one vast mass of hostility. Knowledge,—knowledge must ever be dreaded by those who have petrified what is deemed saving truth into some peculiar, specific, and defined form. They must ever be afraid lest this should be impaired or enlarged. In science they see a deadly enemy; for when have priests and priesthoods, and the advocates of established religions, or of religions that have only attained a sort of half-way to establishment, embodied in creeds and articles,—when have

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they not been jealous of science; when have they not had at least a latent hostility towards, and suspicion of, the progress of scientific discovery? It has been thus in modern times, and in the great days of scientific advance. Thus ever, from the time when Galileo first directed his telescope towards the heavens, to our own, when we see so many fearful of every attempt to lay bare and plain before the public the great discoveries of geology and astronomy, endeavouring to compromise matters, and twist words and phrases, and sometimes, it may be apprehended, to slur over facts, to bring them into harmony with that which the law has enacted we shall receive as truth perfect and unchangeable.

The history of the establishment of specific forms of religion is the history, not only of contention, war, and persecution,—it is not only the history of a struggle against the advance of knowledge,—but it is the history of failure—of universal failure—at least as to its professed purposes. It may have gratified the pride of a class or a sect; it may have opened a mine of wealth to some parties, and high honours and state dignities may have been showered down upon others; but as to producing a real uniformity of religion, it has failed of that; failed from the first, fails still wherever tried, fails egregiously, fails universally. The more nearly you approach towards an external uniformity —such an approach as has been made in some Catholic countries of modern Europe—the more certain you are of a great mass of infidelity beneath the surface. Where the apparent success is greatest, the real discrepancy is greatest also.

But then, it may be said, are these high instincts and mighty tendencies in the individual to become altogether inert when he associates with his fellows, and with them constitutes a state? Is a nation to have no religion, no expression of that which almost every heart in that nation feels, and which almost every voice in that nation, in some way or other, is ready to express? I say not that. I see no reason why great aggregates of humanity, like the individual, should not express that which they feel, express it as they feel it, and do so without interfering with the conscience or with the rights of any who may dissent from that which they think and feel and express. I see nothing ne-

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cessarily or reasonably to interfere with the religious expressions that may occur in the great acts of nations, when they solemnise their formation, their preservation, their liberation, in terms deduced from those undying truths of which our nature is the continuous assertor. Or if they agree beyond this, if they agree in some peculiar and specific forms, why, then, according to those forms let them make that expression, so that the national voice accord with the national feeling. Nothing which is genuine should be suppressed in the nation, any more than in the individual. Let Egypt's priests of old bear the ark of Osiris in solemn procession along the banks of the beneficent Nile; and let Jewish Levites bear the ark of Jehovah before the army marshalled for the conquest of their promised country. Let the old Athenians wreathe with flowers the altar of Minerva. Let Roman senators raise their arms, and swear by Victory, the undying flame of whose altar blazed in their capitol. Let those who hold the most extensive form of Christianity, let mitred and tiaraed pontiffs, celebrate high mass with believing multitudes; and let Archbishops of Canterbury proclaim a fast or a thanksgiving-day, with forms of prayer verbally modified from previous documents of a similar description. Each according to their impulse and condition, let them give expression, social expression, with the same freedom and truth as individual expression, but not calling on men to join in that expression who do not feel with them.

Surely it should not impair to our eyes the brightness of the heavenly orbs as we gaze upon them, nor the majesty of the resounding ocean when its eternal anthem is in our ears, that some may be standing by and looking on, who neither perceive the one nor recognise the other, nor participate in our feelings or in our adoration. What shall be done with them? We must not forget that, general as is the result of the rudimental religious ideas in humanity,—instinctive, in a certain sense, as we have asserted them to be,—there still are those to whose perception the world is without an Author, without a Providence, without a God. Well, what is the first lesson that occurs from this fact? Certainly, not to injure these people,—not in any way to interfere with their rights, or with the justice which is due to them in social concerns or in the appreciation of their characters;

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for if so, we punish a calamity. It is surely a misfortune not to see and to feel with the great majority of the human race on any important topic. It needs no punishment; it is itself a punishment, for which no pride of conscious intelligence or courage can be an adequate compensation to the individual. Let the evil rest there, and do not augment it. A minority will not insult, unless it be insulted. There is great reason to inquire how far such doubt and denial may not be the reaction—the almost inevitable reaction—of the too proud and confident assertion of our own notions as God's truth, and as obligatory upon others by whom they are not perceived, as well as upon ourselves by whom they are perceived. Nothing, therefore, should be thought or felt of such but justice, kindness, and love, which are the fraternal due of man to man. And the fact of their existence, or of their numbers, needs never impede that combined, that aggregate expression, which, enforcing nothing, levying no penalty, conveying no imputation, yet acknowledges the Power to which we owe existence, and renders the homage which we think due to that Power. There is a gracefulness and a wisdom in states sometimes doing this, in sanctioning those mutual agreements which are to consolidate the harmony of nations by an appeal to the divinity whose name is Love. Patriotism seems to grow yet more noble, not only when it cheerfully devotes a life that is necessarily soon to perish, but when it brings into the struggle with ignorance and with oppression the power of an immortal soul, and appeals to the eternal and universal principle of justice, and the sacredness of the cause to which it is devoted. Every great and noble motive seems to grow yet greater and nobler in this light; and so let men in their multitudes, as well as in their individuality, recognise what they cannot but think, what they cannot but feel; recognise it in such expression as nature also dictates to them,—not mere traditionary forms, but expressions that have meaning and soul within them, and which strengthen the feeling while they give it utterance.

Freedom itself may almost be called, perhaps, one of the religious ideas, although not to them is it confined. Freedom is the general, the universal requirement of the faculties of the human constitution for their full and proper development, for their rightful exercise, and for their best

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results. Freedom and religion should be indissolubly associated in our minds; they should coexist. And eminently is freedom—intellectual freedom—needful, when we have to do with subjects connected with eternity and infinity; where there is no voice that can speak with an authority to silence all doubt or inquiry; where we must still be seekers after truth, the most diligent and the wisest of us; where "inquirer" has been the character of man, and will be the character of man as long as he exists; ay, be his character even for immortality. He can never fathom the Infinite. Religious ideas springing up in the mind—vast, undefined, inexhaustible—of themselves, call on us for continuous exercise of thought, as well as for continuous culture of feeling; they light us on our way; they are stars for us to steer by, though never to be approached perceptibly nearer; for the most ignorant and the wisest are still on a level as compared with the Infinite. If we would cherish in all this disposition; if we would have individual life one continuous effort of mental and moral culture, and, in that sense, a continuous sacrifice to the divinity and exercise of religion,—it is, I apprehend, by this view that such a life is best promoted. Here we have no intermediate forms, no specific embodiment of that which cannot be contained in creeds or forms, to stop us in our search, to bar our advance, to say, "Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther;" but we still feel ourselves beckoned onwards, still prompted to pursue the brightness which glows the more brilliantly as we advance, although we never can closely approach to its radiance.

If we would have this to be true, not only of ourselves, but of others,—if we would see through our own country, and through other countries, a spirit of genuine humility and inquiry in religious matters substituted for one of dogmatism,—if we would behold the decline of that sectarian narrowness and strife which occasion so much of pride and of bitterness in the world,—if we desiderate the predominance of the spiritual over the physical, even with those who are most strictly condemned by daily toil to earn their daily bread,—if we are anxious for approximation towards a generous unity of feeling, amid a diversity of thought, in the various modifications to which the religious ideas are subjected in individual minds,—if we would free religion

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from the associations that now beset it, of spiritual domination, of creeds and forms, restriction and persecution, and behold it shining in its native purity and lustre,—if we would have a national religion, a really national religion, which at the same time should be a world religion,—we must seek for it in some very different way from that of state patronage and political establishment.

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LECTURE XIV.

Education.

Education is the voluntary action of mind upon mind, for the purpose of influencing the formation of character. It comprises both teaching and training. Very much that is called by the name is altogether unworthy of being so designated, or only belongs to that lower department of education which, by a distinction common in speech, though perhaps without etymological foundation, is termed instruction as distinguished from education. It is not education merely to communicate the knowledge of facts, to cram the memory. Education comprises much more than this, both in operation and in purpose. It is an intellectual and a moral agency, with an intellectual and moral object. It is, as I have just said, the voluntary action of mind upon mind to influence the formation of character; to influence it,—not to form it; for much goes to the formation of character that is altogether beyond our powers. The schemes of forming men for particular states of society by education, if their formation for such state implies any material difference from the character they would otherwise exhibit, are altogether vain. The tone of society—the influence of literature—the passing events of the time, whether private or public—these, and a thousand other influences, bear upon the formation of character in human beings, which man can no more control than he can direct and change the motions of the planetary bodies. Form a character! you might as well talk of forming a world. God and nature are the real agents. The tendencies of our constitution, the objects by which we are surrounded, the circumstances and events which occur,—these in God, or God in these, constitute the power by which character is made. Far more than by any voluntary efforts which human beings can make is it guided and determined by these. They are ever at work; essential to our existence as the air we breathe; and they modify the

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nature, the qualities, the character, the tendency, of that existence. Directly, by our own formation, and by the action upon our senses of the material world, does God educate humanity; indirectly, by the involuntary and unconscious influence of mankind upon each other,—by the various circumstances that I have just enumerated,—by the social tone,—by the condition of life, in wealth or in poverty, with stimulus to exertion or inducements to indolence,—by public events of a stirring and animated character, or of a quieting and calming tendency,—by books, those which have gained immortal renown, or those which, perhaps, have little worth in themselves, and yet, from peculiar circumstances, exercise an extraordinary power over the individual mind, so that some can date an era in their lives from the perusal of a particular volume: these, acting indirectly, as the other agencies directly, are the means by which mainly we are formed and fashioned. As it has been justly said, the world is God's great infant-school; and there a training is continually going on, which, in itself and in its results, may be often perplexing to us, but which, by that very perplexity, suggests to our minds the hope that this is but preparatory—that its mysteries to us are like the mysteries of instruction to children in the infant-school; and that they must be so, because they embrace a wider and a longer scope, and lead us on, by this very circumstance, to the anticipation of other spheres in which higher influences shall give our minds larger expansion, and prepare us for nobler degrees of moral dignity.

Education, then, is a religious work, according to the explanation which I have endeavoured to give of religion in these lectures, and which, I need scarcely say to those who have heard them, affixes a very different sense to that expression from what it commonly bears in the discussions now going on in our country. When education is usually called a religious work, it is meant that it should be conducted according to some system of technical theology; that its main purpose should be to imbue the youthful mind with certain dogmas—to enforce certain notions upon early credence, so that they may defy investigation or evidence in future years; and, in short, not to educate but to proselyte. In this sense I should deny that education is a religious work; but, in a just interpretation of the

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term, or, at any rate, in that interpretation which has been affixed to the words through these lectures, it is eminently a religious work. It consists in the development of religious beings by religious beings; for education is properly development. Its aim is not to stamp the impress of one being upon another; not to form and fashion and perpetuate our own intellectual and moral likeness, whatever that may be; but to unfold what there is of intellectual and moral vitality in the subject of education. It is to take what God and nature have made, and endeavour to bring it to its full expansion and maturity; in the same way as we place the acorn in the ground, and subject it not only to our own care and tendence, if they be needful, but to the action of the soil, of the dews, of the airs of heaven, and thus watch, and do what little we can towards its full growth and development into the stately oak. Perhaps not much more than this is what we can do in the education of the human being. But even to do that little well and wisely it is requisite that we should have the right object in view—that we should seek development rather than power; not to multiply transcripts of ourselves, but to produce, in their full perfection, the works of the same nature as that to which we owe our own existence. And if there be any truth in the theory I have propounded—that the religious ideas are natural to man; that they are the growth of the human constitution; that it is the tendency of our intellectual and moral being to conceive such ideas, and, with the progress of mind and character, to enlarge those ideas—a continual action and reaction going on; and that man, as he finds himself impelled to think, to fancy, to believe in God and immortality, becomes himself in turn aggrandised and elevated by those very conceptions:—if this be the fact, then the development of these principles in the subject of education must be a material operation of education, the work indeed to which all should tend. For if all be the productions of the same Power, there must needs be in them this harmony, this oneness of consent in their operations.

Strange nonsense it is which we have sometimes heard of "unsanctified science" and "godless colleges"! Why, every science, and every honourable and useful art, all learning that can be got by books into the human mind, or by man's own

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observation or experiment—all has its sanctification; all is, not godless, but full of God; it is in itself one species of the manifestation of Divinity. We need be under no apprehension lest the mountains or the stars should tell us falsehood, or inculcate infidelity. They speak with the same language that the human heart employs, spring from the same Author, have the same character and tendency. And if education be religious as to its subject; if religion be evolved—I speak generally—in the proper development of the powers of the subject of education—assuredly its conscious presence in his mind will be needful for the educator, to keep his eye single to the true and the good; needful to make him aware of responsibility in what he can do, and of the narrow limits of his competence; needful to guide him in the selection of those influences which he should bring to bear upon the solemn charge committed to him, in the training of a youthful but immortal being; needful to sustain his patience, to make him unwearied in well-doing, and long-suffering with ignorance or perversity; and needful to fill all that he attempts, and all that he conceives, with that atmosphere of love which is the union between the earthly and the divine, and gives to his humblest occupations and offices in the work of education a truly godlike character.

This I call religious education. But this is what the controversialists to whom I referred, and people generally in our day, would term secular education only, being devoid of what they mean by religion, which is not religion but theology; not religion in its broad and elementary conceptions, but religion in those additions and interpretations, in those figments, in those little petrifactions and legendary or mythical exhibitions of it, which they have endeavoured to recommend to the world as the life of that of which, in reality, they are at best but the outer husk, and with which very often they have no connection whatever, or only bear a pernicious and obstructive relation thereto. But, according to them, nothing can be religion unless it includes these; and so they would train the infant mind to what—if one sect rule over the education of a country—would make only intellectual slaves; and to what, if all sects are allowed their full play in the education of the people of a country, would only make nests of con-

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tending bigots. We may rely on the influences to which I have adverted for developing the religious principle, in its due time and form, in the human being; and for that it becomes us patiently to wait. They must surely concede that the religion which, by their own records, has existed in a far simpler shape than at present,—the religion which was enough for the piety of holy patriarchs, whose names are venerable, in different countries, and in different specific forms of religion; that what sufficed for their piety may suffice for the piety of the child, until its mind be sufficiently matured to judge for itself on conclusions only supported by historical or metaphysical evidence. That time may come; and then let its powers be exercised freely, as their nature requires.

Hence, what is called secular education, but what I term religious education, or rather education with its natural and inherent tendency towards religion, is all that can be rightfully promoted by public acts, or the interference of the state. The condition of a country in which theological opinions are divided should prevent any notion of overbearing the mind of that country in education by specific forms of doctrine. It is giving one class an undue influence; it is depriving another of its proportionate claims and rights. And if we look to the foundation of society, we see it erected on principles that are utterly inconsistent with such interference. Representation implies the equal rights of all; it places all on the same level; it is not founded on the notion that man is something which a particular sect must take in charge, and train in a particular way, in order to render him the possessor of the common rights of citizenship. It is true that a state cannot directly educate. As it cannot wisely or justly establish a religion, so neither can it wisely or justly establish an education. It is not the business, nor is it within the ability, generally, of the rulers of a state, to prescribe even what relates to the technicalities of instruction, to say nothing of the far more important operation of moral training. But there are some things which the state may and can do. If education be, as to society, a parental privilege, it may facilitate the exercise of that privilege by parents. If it be, in moral obligation, a parental duty, it may enforce on parents the performance of that duty. If education in

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civilised society be an advantage, to the inheritance of which the child is born, the state may secure for him the possession of that heritage. If education be a needful qualification to perform the duties of a member of a political and civilised society, the state may see that its subjects are not despoiled of that provision, nor itself injured by their want of it. All this may be done, and yet more than this. It may scatter over the country the means of education, so that they are attainable easily from every cottage-door. While stimulating local efforts, it may provide that, in localities where the pressure of poverty is combined with the multiplication of ignorance, there shall be help from richer and more favoured localities. It can take care that sects, and churches, and priesthoods do not pervert the operation of education to their own selfish or class purposes. It may, as in professions affecting the health and the property of society, take care that the unqualified shall not rush into a task for which they are unfitted. It may require that those who aspire to teach shall prove that they know; that those who aspire to the guidance of the young shall have the qualities which enable them to exercise self-guidance, and to stimulate and cherish such a power in the minds under their influence. It may find out the proper persons whom to trust; it may invest them with a certain degree of dignity in the eyes of society; it may give them opportunities and advantages for the accomplishment of their great purpose; and then let it stand by and desire a blessing on their endeavours.

It is only in a spirit of reverence for humanity that this work can be achieved. If we believe man born to a poor, narrow destiny,—if we look on him as created only to eat and drink and sleep, to work, and to enjoy wealth for a few years,—then education sinks from its grandeur and its glory. Or if we look on man as a being depraved and cursed, odious in the sight of his Maker, and deserving to be so to his fellow-creatures, as some creeds inculcate, why then education is no longer best considered as a development, for the development of depravity only unfolds the man into a demon. The educator must have before him an ideal of humanity. He must take the actual human being as he finds him; must make allowance for adverse circumstances and hereditary tendencies, perhaps, in intellect and morals, allowing for them in the same way as he would for

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any physical defects. With this exception, the education of one human being is the education of all; it is the expansion, the cherishing, the training of powers to maturity, which are in all, and are evidently there for the purposes of culture. Only with a noble idea of humanity can education be expected to exercise its true and legitimate power in the formation of character.

And education, like religion, has its missions and its inspirations, and not less divine. As some have felt within themselves the glowing impulse to tell their fellow-creatures the thoughts of God and providence, of redemption and immortality, that germinated in their souls, so have there always been, there exist from generation to generation, others who have a similar impulse glowing within them to take and train the human being, and send it on its way, strong and rejoicing, in the world, to accomplish its noblest destinies. There have been, in all the departments and degrees of education, people thus manifested to the world from time to time: a Bell and a Lancaster, for the mechanical arts and actions which are requisite in the training of numbers; Hamiltons and Edgeworths, as expounders and commentators of the detail of instruction, and of the application to it of sound theories of mental and moral philosophy; and for prophets, Rousseaus, Fellenbergs, and Pestalozzis. They have proclaimed to the world the objects for which education should be conducted; and, in so doing, they have indicated the mode, and have shed abroad the spirit which animated their own bosoms.

The business of society is to find the educators, to place them in their sphere, and to give them every facility for their work. And there are always such, if we will but look with the single determination of discovering them and of assisting them. There are those the delight of whose minds through their whole maturity is in communion with infant minds. There are those who can sympathise with a child's thoughts more readily than with those of their own age and standing in life. There are those, alike attracted and attractive when children are in question, whose souls find their home amongst their charge, and sit with them in gladness and rejoicing. Their delight is in their work; they are willing to devote their lives to such an occupation, if society will but let them,—society too often disregarding them, and most strangely misapplying its principles of trade

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or of competition to a subject on which they have no bearing, and with which they have no natural connection. Our object should be to find out God and nature's priesthood for the purposes of education. It exists upon earth, a true and lasting priesthood, more consecrate than are those inducted to their office by all the traditional solemnity of theological forms, — a priesthood bringing man, by its agency, into communion of heart and of mind with his Creator,—a priesthood offering on living altars the best sacrifices of truth and love, in the characters whose formation they have promoted.

And the time will come, we may hope, when society will endeavour to discover and to bring into—not a slavish, and subordinated, and qualified operation—but into the fulfilment of their own proper agency, those who are thus marked by nature for training their youthful fellow-creatures. Doubtless, for such a time we must wait yet, and wait a long while; entangled as society is, on this question, by ill-understood notions of education, most low and unworthy notions; and entangled as society also is by the conflicts of hostile theological parties, demanding religious education, and meaning only juvenile proselytism. We must wait for a time when such conflicts will wear away before the spreading influence of truth; and then, something nobler than the amplest measure of political rights, although it enable every adult to regard himself as an influential member of the community, and as possessing his relative degree of power in the enactment and execution of laws—a right infinitely more important than that of the freedom of industry from restrictions that mar the progress of commercial prosperity—a right more essential than any which relates merely to political condition, or to physical enjoyment and progress,—will be recognised in the people, and its exercise assisted by the state. Then will society, in its loving regard for the individual being, exercise one of its noblest duties, bestow one of the greatest advantages which it is capable of conferring; and humanity, not subject from its birth to the will and purposes of others, but regarded as a holy thing, trained carefully for the purpose, ever kept in view, of its own best natural development—humanity thus circumstanced will, more than ever the world has yet seen, grow up into the image of Divinity.

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LECTURE XV.

Practical Influences.

It will be asked whether the religious ideas—these mere abstractions, as they have been called—are of potency to control the passions of the multitude, to stimulate their discharge of duties, to tame the wildness of their vices. It will be suggested that they need something more tangible, more specific; that there must be the awful sanctions of eternal torments and eternal joys; that there must be prescribed forms and ministering priesthoods; and that only by something thus framed, thus specific, thus applied, can they be kept in that order which the purposes of civil society demand. And what, then, is the meaning of this question? Is it that you think religion exists for the purposes of the civil governor, to enable him to keep a nation in a submissive condition? Is it that you would try and test religion by its fitness for this purpose? What power has authorised the application of religion to any such ends as these? Let those who hold political power look to themselves, to their responsibilities, and to their interests; and, if they claim thus to employ religion, show us some right derived from that same authority from which religion emanates. You have your own coarse means for attaining the coarse purposes of external social order. Are there not institutions and offices, laws and magistracy, gaols and gibbets? Try these, and let religion alone; or, better still, try fair, just, wise, good government, and see whether social order will not be its sure companion, without any appeal to religious sanctions, or to the supposed need of a specific form of religion to exercise its influence over the multitude. It is this notion of religion being something for the use and purpose of the civil governor which has led to the worst hypocrisies, to the most atrocious frauds, to the greatest impostures, that have ever been connected with the name of religion. It has stimulated professions alien

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from the dictates of mind and heart; persecutions the most embittered, wars the most sanguinary. In those pages of the world's history which record the greatest use of religion as the means of government, we see, not the brightest virtues of humanity, but some of its darkest crimes. The theocracies of old Egypt, of Hindostan, of Judæa anterior to the monarchy, of Papal Rome in more recent times—do these, in the fullest exercise of religion as the instrument of government, show any encouragement to its use for that purpose? Do they exhibit such results as to make us feel that this is indeed the mode in which governments should act, and in which a national character should be built up?

If it be true, as politicians sometimes tell us, that the people need a specific form of religion, that they cannot rest in any thing so abstract or spiritual as what has been described, then the people will have it; there will be no lack of a supply for that want. Specific forms of religion will exist, as much as politicians can possibly desire; and they will have this advantage, that they will be in affinity with the people, instead of being alien from them, and imposed upon them by external influence. Those who need marvels in religion, will find legends wild enough to gratify their intensest craving for the marvellous. Those who are not content with ancient prodigies, may have modern ones. If the old prophets do not suffice, new prophets will arise, and will prophesy to them according to their heart's desire. If people must see miracles as well as believe them, new miracles will be wrought. They have been in our own day: Divine judgments have followed the violation of the temperance pledge of Father Mathew; miracles have been wrought by Prince Hohenlohe and others. Providential interpositions, supposed to be of a preternatural kind, are frequent in the histories of modern religionists. Methodism was accompanied by such from its first rise, when, indeed, it struck deep root into the popular mind; and the Roman-Catholic form of Christianity at this very time is spreading amongst us, with its peculiar claims to the Holy Ghost, and miraculous powers residing in the Church down to the present day. Oh, there is no fear of people being without a specific form of religion, if they are in that stage of civilisation with which such specific form holds an affinity. The ruler may rest in peace; he may be assured that

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if the people need miracles for their belief, he will soon find that

"Miracles believed
Work on their minds like miracles achieved."

If they need prophecies and portents, prophecies and portents will multiply around them; if they require forms, forms will be devised, and will be carried out to the most minute directions for bowing and kneeling, and whatever gesticulations are supposed by those who deal in such things to propitiate Divinity. And thus supplied, he may surely rest satisfied that there should be in society those who think the specific form the creature of the day, the offspring of a particular degree of civilisation, and deem it not important as compared with the great, the vital, the enduring essence of religion. It may surely be worthy of his regard, that there should be some who, amid the stormy contentions of hostile creeds, are as oil poured upon the surface of the waters; some who look complacently on all the good that there is in every form of religion, are in affinity with that good, and, by the spirit of love, keep in check the spirit of bigotry.

Others will say of the religious ideas, "Are they sufficient for the salvation of my soul? Will they produce the life of God in the soul of man? Will they create in me a new heart, secure for me a spiritual existence here, and immortal happiness hereafter?" Again, I say, what mean ye? If you desire to know whether, in the religious ideas, we find a God bound by a bargain to the salvation of his creatures; if you seek there for the reconciliation of supposed jarring attributes, by ingenious devices, analogous to the legal tricks of a court of justice; if you inquire whether there be in them an assurance, such an assurance of pardon as you require,—that is to say, your own guilt carried to the account of another, and the righteousness of another imputed to you, till it clothes you as a garment; if you inquire whether there be in those ideas that which will give you the consciousness of a preternatural change within, make you the subject of a miracle, a perpetual living miracle, a loathsome and depraved nature changed preternaturally into an angelic one; if you ask whether there be in these something which will sustain you in an elevated state above your brethren of the human race,—a spiritual and heaven-favoured condition,

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whilst theirs is a carnal and condemned state; if you ask whether there be in these ideas what will certify your future place at the right hand of the Judge, whilst the millions that think not, or feel not, as you do, are to be consigned to his left hand, and to eternal torment,—why, I say No; there is no such thing in these ideas. If this be salvation and spiritual life, I acknowledge that salvation and spiritual life are not in them. But if it be salvation and spiritual life to be ever aspiring to know more of the infinite beauty of the universe and its pervading power; if it be salvation and spiritual life to have the conception of divinity ever growing in the mind, and filling that mind with its majesty and love; if it be salvation and spiritual life to see desires and principles of a lofty nature gaining ever more and more ascendency over our intellectual and moral being, to feel ourselves fraternally bound in one with all mankind,—the universal created becoming one with the Infinite Creator; if it be salvation and spiritual life to look at death, not as the infliction of a vindictive penalty, but as one link in the golden chain which binds the past, the present, and the future, and by which we pass onwards, still surrounded by the same munificent Power and Wisdom, still portions of the same great plan, looking for nearer approaches of the finite towards the Infinite, the created towards the Creator; —if this be salvation and spiritual life, then these simple ideas, the universal heritage of humanity, the testimony of man's own spirit to the spirit of God that is in him, do save the soul, and produce the life of God in the soul of man.

"Oh," but some will say, "how much is cast off to arrive at these simple conceptions of religion! What a long and dreary series of negations and abjurations! How much of 'all that the nurse and all the priest have taught' must have been renounced, to clear away the notion of religion to any thing so single and elementary!" And then we have descriptions of the dreariness of a negative course; of the misery of one negation following another, until at last, perhaps, nothing whatever is left, and the mind sinks into the dreary abyss of Atheism. But is it, indeed, so? May we not be too hasty in applying the offensive term "negation" to a mental process which terminates in the result I have described? Is it nega-

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tion, is it destructiveness, when the cultivator of the soil thins the plants of his fields and his garden—whether weeds, or whether the real fruit-bearing plant itself—when he draws them up by the roots, and flings them away? Why, this destructiveness is essential to increase the produce of his field; he does not destroy, he makes room for full development, and secures a more abundant harvest. Nature itself does something of the same sort, as we may occasionally see in the forest. Some sturdy tree, some oak of more vigorous vitality than other trees near it, sends up its trunk and throws out its branches; as the boughs spread above, the roots spread below, and the ministering of the soil supplies it ever increasingly with food. It flourishes on the elements of earth and air, the dews of heaven from above, and the richness of the soil beneath; thus it grows, and as it grows it lacks space for its expansion; other things wither in its neighbourhood, and seem to retire; and, without the help of the woodman's axe, the space around is cleared for its amplest expansion; and there it stands alone in that regal circle, the monarch of the forest: like eternal truth amid retiring and withering superstitions!

This mental process is not negation; it is positive instead of negative; it is the expansion of the most valuable truths. It is so in reference to Christianity. The inspiration of the scriptures is held to be a Christian truth. Well, and truly they are inspired. What Jews, trained in the bigotry and exclusiveness of their condition in the time of Christ, could teach such lessons of charity and love as did the Apostles but by inspiration? What but inspiration framed the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan? Those lofty lyrics of the prophets, in which they portray the majesty of Jehovah—these are passages that breathe of inspiration. They show the mind in an excited and exalted state, as a spirit akin to spirits of a higher order—akin to the one, the great, the almighty, the eternal Spirit. But do we find this only in the Hebrew and the Christian scriptures? Are there no passages in the Hindoo Veds that have commanded the reverence of enlightened Christians by their sublime monotheism? Were there not passages in the Koran that established the mission of Mahomet in the minds of his countrymen, and made the poets

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of Arabia bow in homage before a greater poet? Was not that inspiration which made the ancients, in all their pride of learning, and the grace of their eloquence, and the growing wisdom of their philosophy, do homage to the name of Plato, as one who spoke on earth the language of the gods? Have we not, in our own literature, passages—many and many a passage—instinct with life and power, which must be felt by every one who comes to it in an appreciating state of mind,—the language of inspiration again and again in our poets and our philosophers, till we feel, by our hearts burning within us, the presence of Divinity?

True, mingled with these are inconclusive reasonings,—perhaps unconsciously, but really, sophistical arguments,—false science, or ignorance of science, mistaken chronology, the temporary overlaying the permanent, and the partial overlaying the universal. All these, and derivation more or less direct from other sources, we may find in company with those outpourings of the soul that seem instinct with a higher power; and which of these can we not also find in the Hebrew and the Christian scriptures? To deny the infallibility of every sentence, the conclusiveness of every argument and assertion—this is not to deny inspiration. We arrive at a better view of it by the very expansion of the notion of inspiration, which has cleared and brightened itself, and grown upon the mind, and expanded our view of the sphere in which it operates; and has thus really made us more truly believers in inspiration than when cherishing that slavish submission to the words of texts on which some pride themselves, as what they call reliance on the word of God.

And so with regard to revelation considered in its connection with facts. If we look for the spirit of the Hebrew and Christian systems, we shall very often find it, not in laws and ordinances applying to temporary circumstances, but in recorded facts—facts very often claiming to be of a preternatural character. We shall see in that pictorial work, the Bible, the tribes of Israel taught the supremacy of Jehovah by the superiority of the wonders wrought by Moses over those of the Egyptian magi. We shall find one miracle supposed to be the enunciation of one doctrine, and another miracle of another. An acute writer has summed up the Old and New Testaments by the declaration, that

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the one teaches by facts the doctrine of a providence, and the other by facts—especially the resurrection of Christ—the doctrine of a future state. If the preternatural were essential to our idea of a revelation, this might be exclusive. But have the stars no voices? Is the history of human nature dumb to us? Do objects and events bring with them no lessons which they leave impressed upon the attentive mind? Why, all nature, all event, is full of revelation to him who is desirous of having revealed to him the beauty, the variety, the grandeur, the great beneficent purposes, enshrined in the system in which we live. The perception of revelation by facts, as extended at once to the grandest and the simplest objects of the material world, has had its power even over the most specific forms of religion; so that we may find religions of the mountains and the woods, of the skies, of the caverns, of the rivers, of the forest, of every element of nature that was known—all have left their broad and deep impress even on specific forms; thus proclaiming that revelations are in them for the enlightened eye and the loving heart that seek to read them there.

God in Christ is put forward as a Christian notion. It is so. God was in the kindness that blessed the clustering babes around him; God in that generous pity that rebuked the Pharisee for reproaching the sinner who anointed his feet with oil, and wiped them with the hair of her head. And is not God in all things godlike; in all moral majesty; in mercy and forgiveness rising above persecution and injury; in devotedness sparing nothing, but giving up friends, time, life, for the world and its advancement? Is not God in all humanity, and in things inanimate too? And if there be truth and beauty in such manifestations as the prophets give us, so is there in others for which a very different class of persons are responsible. If we see a manifestation of God in the prophet Daniel's "Ancient of Days," do we not see one also in the Jove of Phidias? What is the feeling, where the intelligence, where the impartial estimate, when the veneration given to the one is withheld from the other? The pictured majesty that strikes the senses with awe and the heart with reverence—this is a manifestation of Divinity. And I might pursue this train of thought through many other particulars. It is the expansion of truths that exist in the most specific forms of

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Christianity; it is an expansion, and not a negation, by which the mind is led to the contemplation of the universal; it is the positive process, and not the negative. Nor is there any thing really abjured but the exclusiveness which would cramp and confine thoughts of infinitude within the narrow limits prescribed by the bigot's mind.

Progression in religion is to be traced in the scriptures. There is a progression from the family deity of the patriarchal times to the Jehovah of the Hebrew nation; from the Jehovah of the Hebrew nation to the one God and Father of Christ. There is a progression traceable in the views of the Hebrew mind—in the elevation of their conceptions from material rewards and punishments to the spiritual consequences of human character and actions. But within what narrow bounds this progression is limited! Can we call it a negative process when man takes a larger and longer view of religious progressiveness? Is that mere negation? After having been left in darkness by his own revelations, the superior intelligence of Persia and Babylon helped on the Jew in a most important degree, and first gave him his doctrine of the immortality of the human soul. But is it a rejection or a negation of the notion of progressiveness, if we trace it in other changes, in connection with other religions—if we see it not merely in the history of the Jew, but in the history of human nature? Polytheism had its mission as well as monotheism. Monotheism gave more strict and pure and refined conceptions of the Divine essence; but its practical effect was, at the same time, to limit the idea, in its mental realisation, of the Divine presence,—to dissociate it from the objects of human contemplation. Polytheism, on the other hand, lowered—or at least did not raise—the common conceptions of the Divine essence; but it multiplied the lively apprehension of the Divine presence, filling all natural objects with their tutelary deities, and seeing Divinity connected with the flowing streams, the rolling billows, the blossoming fruits and plants. The one made Divinity too remote, the other made Divinity too familiar; but both were contributions towards the gradual progress of the notion of Divinity in the general human mind. Judaism adored a God above nature, and Polytheism beheld its gods in nature. The creed of the Christian church afterwards tried a

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compromise between the two. It endeavoured to become the synthesis of the past—of monotheism and polytheism together—by its doctrine of a Trinity, of the incarnation in human form of the second person, and by its saints and angels. The latter came to fill up the void, to human feelings, left by the outworn mythology; and, by their spiritual character and their national and individual relations, to connect the seen with the unseen world, the finite multitudes of created beings with the one uncreated Infinite, so immeasurably above them as else to seem isolated. This system has been not unwarrantably termed Christian mythology. Its distinct personalities are following those of ancient Polytheism, and fading into the recognition of the universality of the Divine Spirit, incorporate in man and nature, the being of beings, God "all in all." Well, then, here we trace progress—progress contributed to by Judaism and by heathenism; contributed to by what some deem the corruption of Christianity, but still holding on its course. And who is to say that it is now to come to a pause; that there is nothing beyond; that there are no other, better, nobler conceptions of Divinity than those to which the world has thus groped its way? Why, this same process may continue for ages and ages yet to come, and the finite not be perceptibly nearer to the Infinite, nor man able to comprehend his Maker, but still knowing more of him, and knowing him better than he did formerly. And this view of progression—of religious progression,—not only of that advance recorded in the scriptures, but of that which we find amongst various nations; of that which we trace in the history of the world at large; of that which affords indications that it is a certain continuing process in the human mind,—this, I say, is not a negation; it is amplification; it is enlargement of our view of God's truth—of its richness and grandeur as evolved by this same fact of religious progress.

With such views the ardour of proselytism will of course be abated. Exclusiveness is a tendency that will be restrained by the mind, or wholly abolished. Influenced by these simple yet boundless thoughts, man will look around in love, look forward in hope. If different specific modes of worship meet his regards, he will be less inclined to criticise their failings than to detect what there is in

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them of truth and beauty, and with that to find himself in heartfelt sympathy. He will look for it, delight in it; the common thoughts of religionists he will prize more than their varying opinions, as in character he will regard the common elements by which our human nature is built up even to its ideal perfection. He will look onward with none of those man-created fears that make another world so terrible. All worlds to him are but portions of one system, governed on one principle, filled with the same power of Almighty love. He will look to a passage from one of these states into another, as only keeping him within the same security of Almighty care and paternity. He will feel his oneness with what is nearest Divinity on earth, and so be assured that all other scenes and all future ages will only unite him more closely with his God. And, resting in such hopes, his mind will rise above the atmosphere of collision and perturbation; he will ascend towards that calmness and blessedness which are the characteristics of the Infinite and the Eternal.

Here, then, I bring this course of lectures to a close. It has been less interrupted by shattered health than might have been expected at the commencement. But it has defects which I should not seek to excuse were my purpose other than it is, which is simply to give a summary of my own truthful thoughts to truthful minds for their contemplation. Let them have the consideration to which I think they are entitled. Time is rapidly bearing the world on to more enlightened opinions, perhaps, than any of us in the present generation hold; and yet more rapidly is time bearing on individuals to that state where mistakes and ignorance shall vanish away, and where our just, though here imperfect, speculations shall present themselves in all the truth and the grandeur of glorious and eternal realities.

END OF VOL. VIII.

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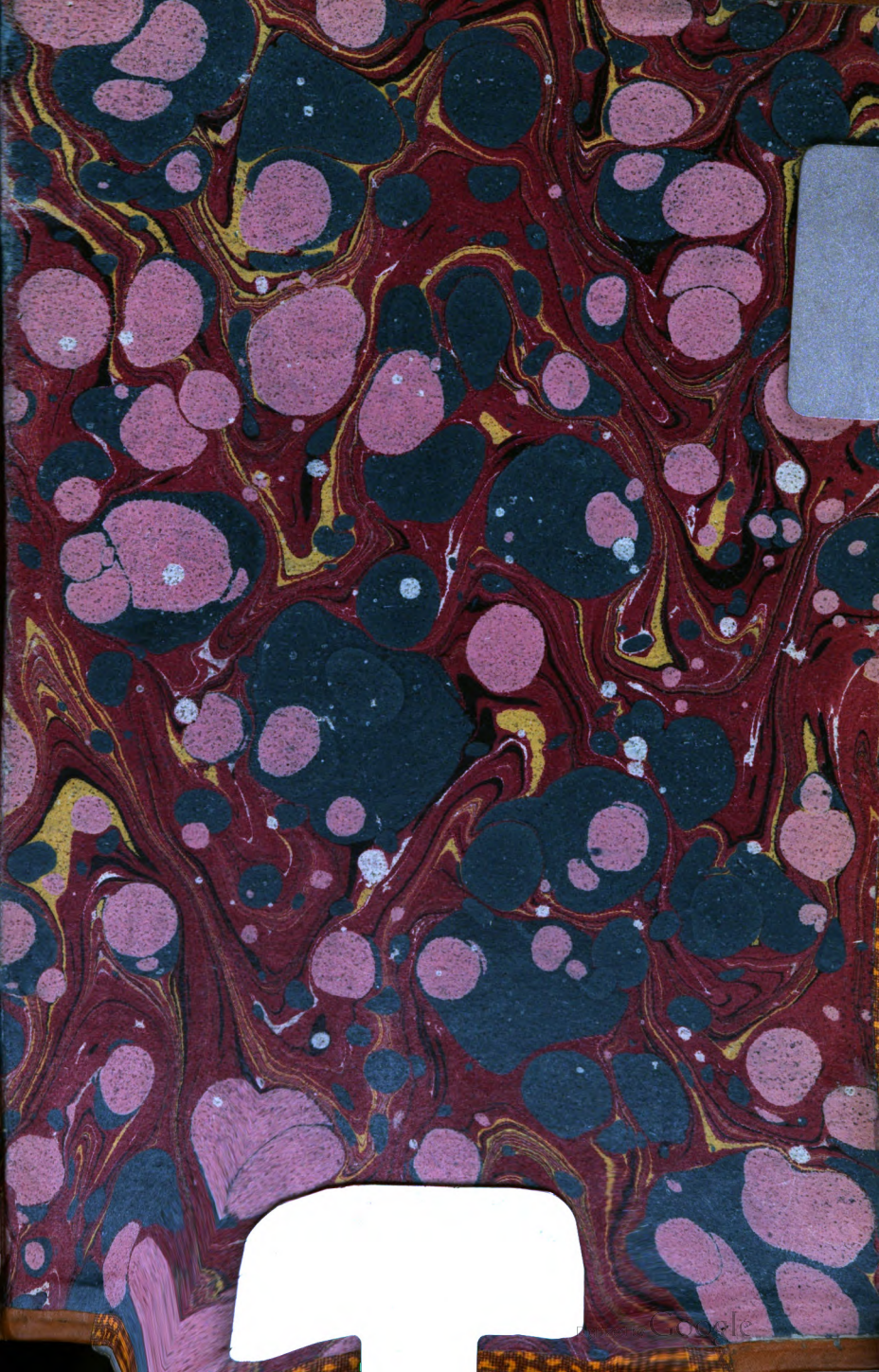
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